MOTION PICTURE REVIEWS

JANUARY 1940

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FEATURE FILMS

ALL WOMEN HAVE SECRETS ◇ ◇

Joseph Allen, Jr., Jean Cagney, Virginia Dale, Peter Hayes, John Arledge, Joyce Mathews, Betty Moran. Based on story by Dale Eunson. Screen play by Agnes Christine Johnston. Direction by Kurt Neumann. Paramount.

The title is out of focus, heading as it does a story of triple undergraduate marriages. It is a picture of immature and irresponsible people entering lightly into a state which requires sober heads and a will for achievement. Of the three couples, the first bicker incessantly, the second live in a trailer, the third engage in night-club singing and janitor's duty. Two couples are visited by a "blessed event"; all are in dire need of financial succor. While the picture pretends to be a warning to heedless collegians, most people will see it as a distortion of college conditions and an insult to the intelligence of modern youth. These attractive young actors deserve a better vehicle.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Misleading **Children, 8 to 12** No

BALALAIKA ◇ ◇

Nelson Eddy, Ilona Massey, Charles Ruggles, Frank Morgan, Lionel Atwill, C. Aubrey Smith, Joyce Compton. Based on the play of the same name. Book and lyrics by Eric Maschwitz. Music by George Posford and Bernard Grun. Score by Herbert Stothart. Direction by Reinhold Schunzel. M.G.M.

The old conflict between the Russian nobility and the proletarians with the reversal of positions following the World War keeps the course of true love far from smooth. *Prince Karagin* finds *Lydia,* daughter of a revolutionist, more desirable than high-born maids, uses his influence to make her a prima donna in Rimsky-Korsakoff's *Schererezade,* but at the moment of her debut the conspirators attempt to assassinate his father. War breaks out, and it is not until the Russions reunite in Paris to run the colorful Cafe Balalaika that the lovers meet again. All of which gives Nelson Eddy a chance to sing stirring and romantic songs and Ilona Massey to impress the public with a charm-

ing personality and a good singing voice, more suited to light chansons than operatic roles perhaps. Nelson Eddy's acting is definitely on the up-grade, and excellent support is lent by Charles Ruggles, Frank Morgan, Joyce Compton. The action is not always smooth but dialogue is good, photography beautiful, and there is dash and sparkle through most of the film.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining

Children, 8 to 12 War Scenes too Emotional

❖

BROTHER RAT AND A BABY ◇ ◇

Priscilla Lane, Wayne Morris, Jane Bryan, Eddie Albert, Jane Wyman, Ronald Reagan, Peter B. Good, Arthur Treacher. Original screen play by John Monks, Jr., and Fred F. Finkelhoffe. Direction by Ray Enright. Warner Bros.-First National.

This is a picture which should never have been made. Its predecessor, *"Brother Rat,"* was a delightful yarn of boys in a military school, whose startling pranks were all excusable by the plea of youth. The current picture shows the same characters in the outside world, participating in such crimes as petty and grand larceny, arson, and kidnaping, all supposed to constitute uproarious comedy. Due to the fact that the cinema audience has had better upbringing than the perpetrators of the plot, it isn't funny at all. The tale has many ramifications, beginning with a news item of an opening for a football coach and naming the likeable if torpid-brained *Bing Edwards* as a candidate. The main part of the film relates the ill-considered moves of *Billy Randolph* in trying to get the position for his former classmate. The film is full of personable young actors who have been given a bad break.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Destructive of ethical values

Children, 8 to 12 No, No

❖

CHARLIE McCARTHY, DETECTIVE ◇ ◇

Robert Cummings, Constance Moore, John Sutton, Louis Calhern, Edgar Kennedy, Samuel Hines, Harold Huber, Warren Hymer and Edgar Bergen, Charlie McCarthy and Mortimer Snerd. Screen play by Edward Eliscu, Harold Shumate and Richard Mack. Direction by Frank Tuttle. Universal.

McCarthy fans may find entertainment in this picture merely because of Charlie's appearance. The story itself is too confusing and badly constructed to admit of a coherent synopsis. Somewhere along the tangled trail of incidents a wealthy magazine owner is murdered, the wrong man accused, and finally the right one discovered, not by Charlie but by Bergen. The culprit, who has been a sympathetic character, confesses in order to exonerate the sweetheart of the girl he loves, thereby giving a totally inappropriate ending. Slapstick fights supply much of the action. Children may like it because of Charlie but it will not improve their taste.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Inadequate entertainment

Children, 8 to 12 Poor

❖

A CHILD IS BORN ◇ ◇

Geraldine Fitzgerald, Jeffrey Lynn, Gladys George, Gale Page, Spring Byington, Johnnie Davis, Henry O'Neill, John Lytel, Gloria Holden, Johnny Downs, Eve Arden. Based on a play by Mary McDougal Axelson. Direction by Lloyd Bacon. Warner Bros.

In 1932 Warner Brothers First National produced a picture entitled "Life Begins." It was set in the maternity ward of a large hospital and dramatically presented the cases of various types of patients. Here we have substantially the same material under a new title. There is a demented woman, a deserted wife, one who has married against her parent's wishes, one who is under sentence for murder. There are babies that are wanted, babies that are unwelcome, babies that live, and babies that die, but scarcely any of the mothers or babies are healthy, normal, happy human beings. The American Medical Association at the time protested the showing of "Life Begins," and "Motion Picture Reviews" carried the following comment which seems equally applicable to "A Child is Born." *The fault of the picture lies in the producer's ignorance or wilful disregard of hospital methods and obstetrical care, in the vicious disregard of truthful realism. To create "drama" they needlessly sacrifice a young mother, callously give false impressions, implant unnecessary fear and suspicion in prospective mothers. In this day of enlightened medical procedure it is unfortunate that a producer should so unfairly place a handicap upon hospitalization and physicians.*

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

CITY OF CHANCE ◇ ◇

Lynn Bari, C. Aubrey Smith, Donald Woods, Amanda Duff, June Gale. Screen play by John Larkin and Barry Trivers. Direction by Ricardo Cortez. 20th Century-Fox.

The heroine eats her cake and keeps it in a big way. As a reporter for her newspaper she goes into a gambling resort to investigate evil conditions, falls in love with one of the owners, cleans up at the gaming tables, turns over the resort to the district attorney and departs with her lover and a sockful of cash to lead an honest life in Texas. This is a fairly exciting but trashy picture, and it is regrettable that such a high-ranking character as C. Aubrey Smith should be included in the cast.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Objectionable

Children, 8 to 12 Bad

CONGO MAISIE ◇ ◇

Ann Sothern, John Carroll, Rita Johnson, Shepperd Strudwick. Screen play by Mary C. McCall, Jr., from the book "Congo Landing" by Wilson Collison. Direction by Henry C. Potter. M-G-M.

"Congo Maisie," second in a series continuing the adventures of that popular heroine, *Maisie Ravier* (Ann Sothern), is a worthy sequel with all the requisites of a good yarn, action, suspense, humor, love interest and a bit of a lesson, although the action sometimes is reminiscent of an old fashioned serial. We find *Maisie,* again the wisecracking show girl, this time stranded in the African Congo. By accident she and *Michael Shane* (John Carroll), a disillusioned young doctor, are forced to take refuge at a medical outpost station in charge of *Shane's* successor, *Dr. McWade* and his wife. The plot thickens when *Shane* is required to perform an emergency appendectomy on *McWade,* carries on a flirtation with his wife, and all with the hovering menace of a savage native uprising to complicate matters. *Maisie's* insight, straightforward talk, and courageous actions, with the help of slight of hand, bring all the tangled situations to a happy conclusion. The hard-boiled characterization of Miss Sothern is excellently played and makes the frankly impossible story entertaining.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
No—too sophisticated

Children, 8 to 12
No—Sophisticated and some scenes harrowing

✤

THE EARL OF CHICAGO ◇ ◇

Robert Montgomery, Edward Arnold, Reginald Owen, Edmund Gwen, E. E. Clive, Ronald. From the book of the same name by Brock Williams. Screen play by Lesser Samuels. Direction by Richard Thorpe. Score by Werner R. Heymann. M-G-M.

One of the unsolved riddles of human behavior reads: which is the more important, heredity or environment? Here is a story which treats the old but ever interesting problem in a new way with the findings preponderantly for environment. The foundling son of the youngest son of a British lord, grows up in the slums of Detroit and Chicago to become first a gangster, known as *Silky Kilmount,* later a prosperous whiskey distiller. A barrister arrives from England to establish *Kilmount's* succession to the peerage, and his own lawyer, to whom he has done an irreparable wrong, persuades him to claim the inheritance. Then a strange and desperate struggle goes on in the consciousness of a man sorely handicapped by ignorance and the scars of an early life of crime and misery when he is surrounded by the grandeur and tradition of his ancestors. Pride of race and love of beauty are inherent traits of his being, and yet he is a prisoner because he is incapable of filling the position he has assumed. Tragedy is precipitated by his lawyer who with subtle efficiency exacts the last ounce of revenge. Although the part of *Silky* is not a pleasant one, it ranks with that of the murderer in "Night Must Fall" as one of Robert Montgomery's finest achievements in acting. It is an unforgettable performance. Edward Arnold has a strong part which he plays with capability and finesse. The whole cast is excellent. Production values are high with fine pictorial effects in the castle halls and the House of Lords. It is a little difficult for an American to admit that in a country where opportunists flourish even a gangster could be abyssmally ignorant of facts of history and general information, but it is better than a dose of Pollyanna at the end, and after all, this is the case for environment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Too mature

Children, 8 to 12
No

✤

EVERYTHING HAPPENS AT NIGHT ◇

Sonja Heinie, Ray Milland, Robert Cummings, Maurice Moscovich, Leonid Kinskey, Alan Dinehart, Fritz Feld, Jody Gilbert, Victor Varconi, William Edminds, George Davis. Original screen play by Art Arthur and Robert Harari. Musical Direction: Cyril J. Mockridge. Direction by Irving Cummings. 20th Century-Fox.

The title of this frothy little comedy has apparently no connection with the story. It is set in the Swiss Alps against a background of snow scenes which afford ample opportunity for skilful shots. Miss Heinie is seen on skis, but her fans will be disappointed by the fact that there is only one lovely skating sequence. The plot concerns correspondents from two rival papers, who are sent to run down the story that a celebrated scientist who was reported murdered a few years previously, is alive, hiding in an obscure village. That their methods of outwitting each other scarcely come under the head of good sportsmanship will not concern any but youthful idealists in the audience. When they meet a beautiful nurse, their rivalry assumes new qualities. They suspect that her patient is the mysterious scientist and their guess is correct. Further complications then develop which create dramatic situations. In the end one lad gets the girl, the other, the famous doctor's memoirs. The cast play their roles as though they enjoyed them and the direction sets a lively pace.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Yes

Children, 8 to 12
Yes, but more romance than action.

THE FIGHTING 69th ◇ ◇

James Cagney, Pat O'Brien, George Brent, Jeffrey Lynn, Alan Hale, Frank McHugh, Dennis Morgan, Dick Foran, William Lundigan, Guinn Williams. An original screen play by Norman Reilly Raine, Fred Niblo, Jr., and Dean Franklin. Direction by William Keighley. Warner Brothers.

There seem to be two schools of thought concerning war pictures, one, that people should see them in order to get a graphic idea of the horrors of war and thus be inclined toward peace, the other, that people should not see them because however great the illustration of carnage might be, the adventure and excitement of war may still have an appeal. Perhaps it is wisest to keep the mind pliant until the slant of the film can be determined. During the World War, the 69th Regiment of the National Guard of New York became a part of the Rainbow Division. "The Fighting 69th" is the pseudo-history of the regiment during this time, including its training at Camp Mills, its overseas service, and its eventual return. From the mass of men in the regiment emerge a number of powerful characters, and through them the story is told. There is *Major Wild Bill Donovan* (George Brent), a brilliant, hard-headed soldier, *Sgt. Wynn* (Allan Hale) a true fighting Irishman, *Joyce Kilmer* (Jeffrey Lynn) the poet, killed in action, *Father Duffy* (Pat O'Brien) chaplain, humanitarian, friend, and *Jerry Plunkett* (James Cagney) a tough, recalcitrant, independent, little wretch whose brave talk back of the lines is in sharp contrast to his cowardice in action. *Father Duffy* endeavors to help him through a renaissance of faith and finally succeeds. The role is a most unsympathetic one for Cagney and he plays it uncompromisingly. As might be expected the story is lusty, lightened by broad humor and softened by the presence of the priest. No women enter the plot to confuse the basal theme. The war scenes are vivid, stark, less confusing than most, and, as far as one's sensibilities are concerned, unsparing in detail. If there is any doubt as to the slant of the picture, it is dispelled when Father Duffy's spirit returns in an epilogue to make a fervent plea for peace in the names of all those who, but a short time ago, died to achieve it.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Too much violence

Children, 8 to 12
No

GONE WITH THE WIND ◇ ◇

Clark Gable, Leslie Howard, Olivia de Havilland, Vivien Leigh, George Reeves, Fred Crane, Hattie McDaniel, Everett Brown, Zack Williams, Thomas Mitchell, Oscar Polk, Barbara O'Neil, Victor Jory, Evelyn Keyes, Ann Rutherford, Howard Hickman, Alicia Rhett, Rand Brooks, Carroll Nye, Marcella Martin, Laura Hope Crews, Harry Davenport, Lena Roberts, Jane Darwell, Mary Anderson, Ona Munson. Screen play by Sidney Howard based on Margaret Mitchell's novel "Gone with the Wind". Music by Max Steiner. Direction by Victor Fleming. Selznick International-M.-G.-M.

A book so rich in historical and romantic material as "Gone With the Wind" could hardly have been less than a *tour de force* on the screen, but the film is much more than just another super spectacle. It not only vividly recreates the Old South, the Civil War, and the Reconstruction Period, but it combines fascinating historical material with intensely vivid and consistent character portrayals, an achievement rarely attained in the epic type of film. *Scarlett O'Hara* and *Rhett Butler* as played by Vivien Leigh and Clark Gable will make an indelible mark on the pages of motion picture history, and Hattie McDaniel's *Mammy* is a masterpiece of dramatic interpretation. The adaptation is amazingly skilful and the sets, the costumes, the photography, the musical score, the handling of the enormous cast, the excellent acting of even the smallest roles bespeak a marshalling of superlative talent. But with all its virtues the film will not appeal to everyone because in greater part the story is a tragic and unpleasant account of bitterness, selfishness, frustration and suffering. *Scarlett's* one redeeming quality is her unbreakable will, and almost the only vulnerable spot in *Rhett's* armour of brutal and complacent selfishness is his extravagant love for his child. The war between the North and the South is never a happy subject, though it is shown here with admirable freedom from prejudice and unusual insight into its social and economic significance. Liking the production or not, audiences cannot fail to be enthralled by its power, its visual beauty, and its magnificent scope.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Mature in some respects but intensely interesting and worthwhile

Children, 8 to 12
Entirely too long, too emotional and beyond their comprehension

❖

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS ◇ ◇

Feature Length Color Cartoon. Paramount.

Jonathan Swift's "Gulliver's Travels" is a searching political satire as well as a fascinating fairy tale. Max Fleischer's cartoon version is lightly satirical, in the main a story-book tale of the Lilliputian people whom a shipwrecked sailor discovers on a far-away isle. Two stubborn kings of the

small people break off the betrothal of a princess and array their hosts of minute soldiers against each other, all because of a disagreement over whose national anthem should be sung at the wedding. *Gulliver* is discovered asleep on the beach, and he is tightly bound by the clever machinery of the inhabitants. When he breaks loose, he good-naturedly agrees to settle the difficulties of his erstwhile captors. The drawings and characterization of *Gulliver* are perhaps the most delightful thing in the picture, although the night-watchman, the two kings and the spies have pronounced personalities. It is a good film for children because there is really nothing frightening; even the villians are amusing rather than hair-raising figures. While the color is rich, it is a little heavy at times, and the modern swing dance number is an anachronism which might advantageously be omitted, although the musical score is very pleasing on the whole. One instinctively compares this picture with "Snow White," and in so doing misses the perfect rhythm and the whimsical touch of the master cartoonist, but it has numerous technical touches which are unusual and cleverly imaginative. It is in fact excellent, a welcome addition to available pictured folk-lore.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good

Children, 8 to 12 Very good

❖

HENRY GOES ARIZONA ◇ ◇

Frank Morgan, Virginia Weidler, Guy Kibbee, Slim Summerville, Douglas Fowley, Owen Davis, Jr. Based on a story by W. C. Tuttle. Screen play by Florence Ryerson and Milton Merlin. Direction by Edwin L. Marin. M-G-M.

Three seasoned comedians, Frank Morgan, Guy Kibbee and Slim Summerville are cast in a Western which fails to be either very funny or wildly exciting. Frank Morgan's humor has been described as surprise registered upon belated understanding, but in this case there seems to be a dearth of understanding and a surplus of slapstick. A broken down actor inherits a ranch in Arizona only to find that his predecessor has been murdered. He is ready to flee until he meets his young relative *Molly* who bolsters up his courage; later sheer accident makes him a hero. Virginia Weidler is proficient beyond her years in acting and is one of the bright spots in a film with a stereotyped story and uninspired direction.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Waste of time

Children, 8 to 12 Unsuitable

HIS GIRL FRIDAY ◇ ◇

Cary Grant, Rosalind Russell, Ralph Bellamy, Gene Lockhart, Porter Hall, Helen Mack, Ernest Truex, Cliff Edwards, Clarence Kolb, Roscoe Karns, Frank Jenks, Regis Toomy, Abner Biberman, John Qualen, Billy Gilbert, Alma Kruger, Pat West. From the play "The Front Page" by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur. Screen play by Charles Lederer. Direction by Howard Hawks. Columbia.

"The Front Page" is an excellent stage play, and its adaptation to the screen is equally good entertainment, speedy in action and even faster in dialogue. The plot is substantially the same except that *Hildy Johnson* appears as a girl in this version and, by a slight alteration in the story, is the ex-wife of the managing editor of the newspaper, whereas she had formerly been a reporter and feature writer. After a Reno divorce she comes to the office to tell her former husband that she is through with the crazy life she has led in the newspaper game and is about to marry a safe and sane insurance man and settle down to normal living. Then the fun starts: he tries to reawaken her interest by involving her in a "hot story"; her fiance finds himself in unpredictable and embarrassing situations; and she battles to keep her independence and forget her reporting instincts. It is exceptionally clever, exciting melodrama, a bit hard on newspaper men, but highly entertaining. The lines are very funny and the pace is the fastest on record with a new device in recording making it possible to catch the conversations of several people speaking simultaneously. The cast are superbly suited to their parts, each definitely scoring a hit even in the smaller roles. Of these John Qualen as the condemned man and Billy Gilbert in an eccentric bit, are particularly outstanding. Direction is excellent.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Exciting

Children, 8 to 12 Mature and very exciting

❖

THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME ◇

Charles Laughton. Sir Cedric Hardwicke, Thomas Mitchell, Maureen O'Hara, Edmond O'Brien, Alan Marshal, Walter Hampden, Harry Davenport. Screen play by Sonja Levien. Music by Alfred Newman. Direction by William Dieterle. Produced by Pandro S. Berman. R.K.O.-Radio.

In this screen portrayal the sombre Hugo classic retains all of its prestige as literature's supreme horror story. The film producer has not only mustered to his aid, all the technical devices which heighten the tense action but has assembled a brilliant cast for its portrayal of character. The opening scenes move so rapidly that there may be confusion in the minds of those not acquainted with the story and the historic era in which it is set. But later the individuals

begin to emerge from their background and strike the old familiar notes of romance and treachery and thwarted passion. The continuity is excellently done, omitting nothing essential to the plot. As to the characterization, those who saw Lon Chaney in the title role will inevitably compare him with Charles Laughton in this version, perhaps not to the latter's advantage. The supremely grotesque makeup is a powerful ally to any actor of such a role, but to rise above grotesquerie to depict a human being, moved by familiar human emotions, is certainly the supreme histrionic achievement. There are differences of opinion as to Mr. Laughton's success in this feat, but many feel that from being a monster almost too repulsive to look at he emerges into a figure of superlative pathos. Sir Cedric Hardwicke as the villain plays a part of deep restraint that is both compelling and convincing. Walter Hampden is impressive as the spiritual Archbishop. Maureen O'Hara is appealing in a role much less clearly individualized than the other major roles. The photography is a triumph of modern camera work, especially in the mob scenes and in picturing the beautiful Cathedral of Notre Dame. Direction is good. However, the picture is much too gruesome for the average taste in entertainment, and its brutalities are horrifying. Merely the sight of the Hunchback should give sensitive children nightmares. To a few thoughtful adults the story may carry the encouraging message that the race has progressed far since the medieval practices of deciding guilt or innocence by trial by ordeal, of staging public executions, and of permitting mob violence and attendant evils.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Doubtful*

Children, 8 to 12 No

*The teen age, curiously enough, seem to feel the horror too far removed from reality to be shocked as much as their elders, but it will be entirely a matter of individual taste in recommendation.

❖

JUDGE HARDY AND SON ◇ ◇

Lewis Stone, Mickey Rooney, Cecilia Parker, Fay Holden, Ann Rutherford, Sara Haden, June Preisser. Maria Ouspenskaya. Story and screen play by Carey Wilson. Musical score, David Snell. Direction: George B. Seitz. M-G-M.

The rock upon which the *Judge Hardy* series has built its popularity is the fine relationship of an ideal father to his family, and the scenes in which the *Judge* displays his understanding of his children's problems and reveals his wholesome code of living are always outstanding.

So again in a picture which is rather overloaded with tearful sentiment and in which the interest is divided among three distinct plot elements, Lewis Stone's endearing character portrayal makes such a genuine appeal that the faults of the picture are forgotten in the feeling of confidence it gives in American family life. This time *Andy* is, as usual, deep in debt and involved in the complications of an adolescent romance. When *Mrs. Hardy* becomes seriously ill, small troubles and misunderstandings are forgotten in the family's realization of what *Mother* means to them, and when she is recovering, *Andy* finds a way to solve his money troubles by helping his father to help someone else.

Future *Hardy* pictures might be improved if *Andy's* girl friends took an interest in some diversion besides kissing.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent

Children, 8 to 12 Perhaps, but has a good deal of emotion

❖

THE LIGHT THAT FAILED ◇ ◇

Ronald Colman, Walter Huston, Muriel Angelus, Ida Lupino, Dudley Digges, Ernest Cossart. Screen play by Robert Carson, based on a novel by Rudyard Kipling. Music score: Victor Young. Direction by William A. Wellman. Paramount.

Perhaps Kipling's story is dated. In any event the film emerges as just another tale of the British Empire and the traditional loyalty of its soldiers to one another. The character of the artist who goes blind and commits suicide is handled with restrain by Mr. Colman, but it fails to arouse the sympathy it should. Ida Lupino gives a powerful impression of the little street waif who defaces the artist's masterpiece, but the painting itself would better have been left to the audience's imagination. Of the cast, *"Zinkie,"* the Scottie, rises above all handicaps and emerges as a star.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

MARRIED AND IN LOVE ◇ ◇

Alan Marshall, Barbara Read, Patric Knowles, Helen Vinson. Story and screen play by S. K. Lauren. Direction by John Farrow. R.K.O.-Radio.

In this story of two women in love with one man, the odds seem heavily on the side of clever, beautifully apparelled *Doris,* who held a prior attachment as his college sweetheart. She is the predatory type who, having found marriage for wealth and position not entirely flawless, turns to romantic adventure with little pity for the man's unselfish, loyal wife. In the struggle *Helen* develops into a stronger person and retains her husband by proving that their marriage has a firmer foundation than the glamor of an old love. Direction by John Farrow is largely responsible for the success of a picture which has such simple outlines that it might have gone flat without his skilful touch. Intermittent

photographic cut-backs sketch in the past of the characters, and situations are handled with good taste. Alan Marshall, Helen Vinson, Barbara Read and Patric Knowles are all well cast and make the various people seen true to life.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too sophisticated — **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

MEXICAN SPITFIRE ◇ ◇

Lupe Velez, Leon Errol, Donald Woods, Linda Hayes, Elisabeth Risdon. Based on story by Joseph A. Fields. Screen play by Joseph A. Fields and Charles E. Roberts. Direction by Leslie Goodwins. R.K.O.-Radio.

This is a poor sequel to the romance of *Carmelita* and *Dennis*. When the newlyweds return from their honeymoon, *Dennis'* aunt and his former fiance conspire to wreck the marriage and are doing well with their scheme until *Uncle Matt* intervenes. Leon Errol in a double role as the uncle and the eccentric *Lord Epping* is uproariously funny, especially in the scenes where he dodges himself coming in and out of the dining-room. He is ninety percent of the picture, and the less said of the other ten percent the better. Lupe Velez can act if provided with a good part, but here she is cheap and vulgar! The grand finale shows her in the center of a wedding-cake-throwing contest which outstrips the custard pie battles of days gone by.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No. Low standards — **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

OF MICE AND MEN ◇ ◇

Burgess Meredith, Betty Field, Lon Chaney, Jr., Charles Bickford, Roman Bohnen, Bob Steele, Noah Beery, Jr., Oscar O'Shea, Granville Bates, Leigh Whipper, Leona Roberts, Helen Lynd. Novel by John Steinbeck. Screen play by Eugene Solow, adapted from stage play produced by Sam Harris. Produced and directed by Lewis Milestone. Hal Roach-United Artists.

John Steinbeck's novel is a great literary achievement, and the film is a magnificent visual interpretation. It has a tragic theme of frustration and loneliness with no concession to sentimentality. It is pathetic and brutally realistic, but it is true to a certain phase of life, and while it is heart breaking, underneath there is the beauty of compassion, of self-sacrifice and of man's kindness to man. A grim, depressing story has been brilliantly transferred to the screen with all its power but without the obscenity that was part of both the play and the novel. Much of the credit is due to the director and to the actors for their excellent handling of a difficult subject.

It would be difficult to imagine a more perfect cast. Lon Chaney, who at times may overact, is yet very compelling as *Lennie*, the child-like giant whose innocent naivete is coupled with a brutal strength which marks his doom. Burgess Meredith in the role of *George*, by his restraint, gives a natural and unforgettable portrait of a man whose understanding and pity for *Lennie* forces him to remain his guardian, giving up all that would make like worthwhile because he will not desert the simple-minded creature. Betty Field, last seen as the delightful adolescent in "What a Life," is a surprise as *Mae*, the cheap, pleasure loving, lonely, defeated girl, a curse to all with whom she comes in contact. Roman Bohnen of the New York Theatre Guild, gives a moving portrayal of the tragic, pathetic *Candy*.

All of the cast deserve credit, notably Charles Bickford in the one sympathetic role, Bob Steele as *Curley* and Leigh Whipper as the bitter, sadistic *Crooks*.

The photography is outstanding. The settings, while not attractive in themselves, are made so by careful lighting and composition. They suggest Millet in his treatment of common characters against a background of the soil. Camera angles are used effectively to heighten dramatic effects, especially where *Lennie* crushes *Curley's* hand. The scene is so startling that later climaxes seem less compelling after it. Music lovers will appreciate the effective and beautiful score.

The film, at no time, becomes cheap or sensational. It, like the book, must be admired for its masterly treatment of the theme. It is a view of life important in social appraisal, but seldom seen in motion pictures. It is not entertainment in any sense, but it is well worth seeing for its dramatic honesty.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 By no means — **Children, 8 to 12** Absolutely not

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RAFFLES ◇ ◇

David Niven, Olivia DeHavilland, Dame May Whitty, Dudley Digges, Douglas Walton. Based upon the adventures of "The Amateur Cracksman" by E. W. Hornung. Screen play by John Van Druten and Sidney Howard. Direction by Sam Wood. Produced by Samuel Goldwyn. United Artists.

Raffles, the gentleman thief, does not somehow seem so thrilling as he did a decade ago. Is it because the daily drama of today dwarfs his importance and a stolen emerald necklace seems less exciting than, let us say, a purloined blueprint of an aeroplane? It is a drawing room melodrama about a popular cricket player who steals for gain, but more for the pleasure of confusing Scotland Yard. His last adventure tricks him although an altruistic purpose is behind the theft. It is smoothly acted by David Niven, Dame May Whitty and Dudley Digges. Olivia DeHavilland's role is less exacting, but she is beautiful, as always. It is well directed and is

entertaining but the familiar pattern of the plot somehow lacks the spark which once made it out of the ordinary.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Needs adult evaluation **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

REMEMBER THE NIGHT ◇ ◇

Fred MacMurray, Barbara Stanwyck, Beulah Bondi, Elizabeth Patterson, Sterling Holoway, Willard Robertson, Charles Waldron, Paul Guilfoyle, Georgia Caine. Screen play by Preston Sturges. Directed by Mitchell Leisen. Paramount.

A beautiful and smartly dressed young woman is being tried for her third thieving offense. Realising that the Christmas season may soften the jury so that a conviction will be difficult, the District Attorney arranges a postponement of the case. Then, moved in turn by the holiday spirit, he gets bail for her. The professional bondsman, misinterpreting this sentiment, dumps the woman on the lawyer's doorstep. He offers her money to tide her over the holiday, then finally suggests that he drive her to her home near his own in Indiana for the vacation. When she is not welcomed by her mother, he gaily takes her on to his own home, where they spend a pleasant week on the farm and fall in love. Driving back to New York, he gives her a chance to escape in Canada and proposes at Niagara Falls. He then tries to throw the case in court. She confesses to save him from disbarment, a procedure sure to have followed under the circumstances. The final fadeout shows her in his arms while he promises to "hold her hand" when she is sentenced and to "wait for her."

This is a brief outline of a plot so sentimental and false in ethics that it is dangerously anti-social. The girl is supposed to have reformed during her week at the farm, but there is no excuse for the lawyer to degrade himself and his profession in order to save her from a just penalty. In these days of enlightened treatment of cases and easy probation, another outlet was available, if we accept the regeneration motif. The film is another example of the current fad for glamorizing pretty miscreants, and for lessening confidence in unbiased legal procedure. The fact that the production values are high, the cast attractive and competent, and the directorial touches clever, makes the picture more dangerous for immature audiences and more unpalatable for others.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Absolutely not **Children, 8 to 12** No

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THE SHOP AROUND THE CORNER ◇

Margaret Sullavan, James Stewart, Frank Morgan, Joseph Schildkraut, Sara Haden, Felix Bressart, Inez Courtney, William Tracy, Sarah Edwards. Based on the play by Nickolaus Laszlo. Produced and directed by Ernest Lubitsch. M-G-M.

So many current films seem to run to sociological and psychological problems that it is with great relief that we find this one simply a light and very diverting tale about every-day events in the lives of every-day people. It is the story of *Mr. Matuschek,* who owns a smart novelty and leather shop in Budapest and of how his emotional moods affect his employees and their relations with each other. There is also a romance by correspondence to be settled satisfactorily. It is rich in humor and enlivened by the clever touches introduced by Ernest Lubitsch which, without words, express the emotional tension in the air. The role of *Matuschek* is a dramatic one of many moods, and Frank Morgan is excellent in one of his best opportunities. He looks Hungarian and acts it. In fact, the whole cast create a foreign illusion except that Jimmy Stewart is as ever just plain American. He is really fine in his role, but the unique characterizations, in addition to Frank Morgan's, are given by Joseph Schildkraut, Felix Bressart, and William Tracy, who fit into the setting and give a distinctive atmosphere to a clever film. Margaret Sullavan is, as always, attractive and most competent. Sara Haden, Sarah Edwards and Inez Courtney are also excellent. For good fun we recommend that you visit the "Shop Around the Corner."

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Mature

❖

SLIGHTLY HONORABLE ◇ ◇

Pat O'Brien, Edward Arnold, Broderick Crawford, Ruth Terry, Claire Dodd, Alan Dinehart, Janet Beecher, Phyllis Brooks. From the novel "Send Another Coffin" by F. G. Presnell. Screen play by Ken Englund. Direction by Tay Garnett. Walter-Wanger-United Artists.

The opening scene, with wisecracking around a flower covered coffin, is novel if not edifying. *John Webb* is an honest lawyer who tries to stamp out corruption in political high-places and moves through the film in constant jeopardy from flying knives which eliminate many members of the cast. The intricate plot does not reveal a convincing motive for the crime. Violence and

cheap humor are mingled indiscriminately. Edward Arnold is efficient in his part, although it is a thankless one, but Pat O'Brien and Alan Dinehart indulge in needless exaggerations, and Ruth Terry looks so much like a pretty girl out of Esquire that her conquest of the leading man seems out of line with usual cinema procedure.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Confused ethics

Children, 8 to 12 No indeed

❖

SWANEE RIVER ◇ ◇

Don Ameche, Andrea Leeds, Al Jolson, Felix Bressart, Chick Chandler, Russell Hicks, Hall Johnson Choir. Screen play by John Taintor Foote and Philip Dunne. Direction by Sidney Lanfield. Musical direction by Louis Silvers. 20th Century-Fox.

A biography of Stephen Foster, revised for dramatic and sentimental effect, is true in spirit to the times in which he lived and to the songs he wrote which will endure in American hearts for generations yet to come. It is the story of a man who immortalized the melodies of the negroes, who loved the South and married a maid of Dixie only to succumb to success and to drink himself to an early death. The picture ends with the singing of the *Swanee River* on the night he dies. The film is done in beautiful Technicolor, and Andrea Leeds as *Jane,* Don Ameche as *Foster* and Al Jolson as the minstrel-show singer play with sincerity of feeling. Throughout the production run the songs which are dear to all of us and are truly American: *Oh Susanna, Old Folks at Home, Jeanie With the Light Brown Hair,* and *Swanee River.*

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes.

Children, 8 to 12 Yes, because of of the music.

❖

TWO THOROUGHBREDS ◇ ◇

Jimmy Lydon, Joan Brodel, Arthur Hohl, J M. Kerrigan, Marjorie Main. From a story by Joseph A. Fields. Screen play by Joseph A. Fields and Jerry Cady. Direction by Jack Hiveley. R.K.O.-Radio.

This is a story of a helpless boy dependent upon grudging, poverty-stricken relatives, and his love for a little orphaned foal, whom he knows in his heart is the colt of a great race-horse stolen from an adjoining ranch. His struggles to retain it and his studies in animal husbandry to know how to raise it properly form the main part of the simple story. A little oversentimental, a little tinged with "hokum," it is nevertheless a truly sympathetic story of a boy and his horse. The acting of young Jimmy Lydon is particularly good, and Arthur Hohl is worthy of mention as the horny-handed uncle.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good

Children, 8 to 12 Too emotional for some

❖

SHORT SUBJECTS

BLUE DANUBE ◇ ◇

Hugh Harmon-M-G-M. Musical direction by Scott Bradley.

Fairies gather the bluing from flower cups to azure the Danube. While some of the cartoonist's views are exquisite in color, etherial in quality, the fairies are as spankable as Rubens cherubs and the nymph bears a resemblance to Lady Godiva. However pretty the conceits of drawing and painting, the film is not exactly what one would expect as an illustration of the Blue Danube Waltz.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes. for the music and many beautiful views

Children, 8 to 12 Yes

❖

CRISIS IN THE PACIFIC ◇ ◇

The March of Time. No. 5, Vol. VI

Produced by the Editors of "The March of Time" Magazine, No. 5, Vol. 1.

This news review begins with a brief resume of the European War situation, then shifts to the Pacific, to Tokyo and to the Island of Guam now being improved as an important airbase for the U. S. A. The film is well photographed and packed with interest although it does not take an objective point of view, as it strongly urges armament.

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MOTION PICTURE REVIEWS

FEBRUARY
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FEATURE FILMS

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Swiss Family Robinson

SHORT SUBJECT

Mighty Hunters

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FEATURE FILMS

ADVENTURE IN DIAMONDS ◇ ◇

George Brent, Isa Miranda, John Loder, Nigel Bruce, Elizabeth Patterson. Screen play by Leonard Lee and Franz Schulz. Direction by George Fitzmaurice. Musical direction by Sigmund Krumgold. Paramount.

Jewel thieves, working through a fashionably dressed girl accomplice, attempt to steal diamonds from a mine in Capetown, but they are finally apprehended when the girl is persuaded by an admirer to work with the investigators for the mine operators. The picture is sophisticated in tone and lightened by comedy. It has nothing new in the way of plot, but a trip through the mine and an ostrich race add interest. As usual the pretty lady crook reforms and wins the love of an honest young man.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Ethically poor **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

THE BLUE BIRD ◇ ◇

Shirley Temple, Johnny Russel, Spring Byington, Nigel Bruce, Russel Hicks, Laura Hope Crews, Gale Sondergaard, Eddie Collins, Sybil Jason, Jessie Ralph, Helen Ericson, Cecilia Loftus, Al Shean, Gene Reynolds. Based on play by Maurice Maeterlinck. Screen play by Ernest Pascal. Additional dialogue by Walter Bullock. Direction by Walter Lang. Music by Alfred Neuman. Director of photography, Arthur Miller. 20th Century-Fox.

Children will probably catch the import of Maeterlinck's "Blue Bird" more surely in the film adaptation than in either the book or the stage play. The moral that anyone can find the key to happiness when he is willing to contribute, is tellingly presented. The production has been given a spectacular and modernized background, and some scenes are radiantly beautiful. It is not possible, however, to claim that the film has reached perfection in the handling of the subject. At times there is a sophistication in treatment which is not in keeping with Maeterlinck's lovely story. As the children go in search of the Blue Bird, representing happiness, they seek first the past. This scene is one of the simplest, most delightful of all; and yet the thought of holding children to the past by making the happiness of those who have left this world depend upon the constant remembrance of those still living, may carry a sense of pain and responsibility to imaginative children. The search for happiness in luxury is whimsical and delightfully amusing, and few children can overlook its message. The scene in the woods is a spectacular technical achievement, but it is overdone, and younger children may be terrified by the suggestion that nature takes revenge upon human beings. The future is represented in a beautiful setting filled with Hollywood's loveliest children, representing those who are waiting to be

born: the little girl tearfully waiting to be called and constantly disappointed because up to now her parents were too busy and did not want her; the little sister who will come to *Mytle* and *Tyltyl's* home but cannot stay long; and the boy and girl who are torn from each other's arm and whose romantic idyl is over because they will not be born in the same age on earth. This particular scene is in questionable taste, and the suggestion that babies are at times unwilling to leave an ideal existence to enter the world and meet life's difficult problems is not one to present to children.

Some of the characters, particularly *Tylette* and *Light* are strictly "Hollywood," but Shirley Temple is a sturdy, charming little *Mytle* whom children will love. Johnny Russel's unself-consciousness and enchanting youth make his part outstanding. Others in the cast, notably Spring Byington (*Mummy Tyl*), Russel Hicks (*Daddy Tyl*), Cecilia Loftus and Al Shean (*Grandma* and *Grandpa Tyl*), and Laura Hope Crews and Nigel Bruce (*Mr. and Mrs. Luxury*), bring naturalness and reality to delightful roles. The musical background is designed to carry out the spirit of childlike fantasy, and its beauty cannot fail to touch youthful as well as adult audiences.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 Yes, unless very sensitive

BROADWAY MELODY OF 1940 ◇ ◇

Fred Astaire, Eleanor Powell, George Murphy, Frank Morgan, Ian Hunter. Direction of Norman Taurog. M. G. M.

Movie goers know from experience what to expect of a "Broadway Melody," and in the 1940 issue their expectations will be more than realized because it is probably the best of the series. It is a cleverly knit piece of entertainment combining dancing, singing, vaudeville acts, and a plausible plot. Above all else, the dancing deserves kudos, for the principals have outdone themselves in bringing their particular skill to the screen. The plot is simple but effective. Two young men working in a cheap dance hall and hoping for a better job, are spotted by a producer. One (George Murphy) is signed to play opposite a Broadway favorite. When his success and too much liquor go to his head, the other member of the team (Fred Astaire) pinch hits for him. From this point, on both fairly drip nobility, and since nothing as light as this could end other than happily, both receive acclaim in the end.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Mature but passable

Children, 8 to 12 Mature

CALLING PHILO VANCE ◇ ◇

James Stephenson, Margot Stevenson, Edward Brophy, Sheile Bromley, Ralph Forbes, Donald Douglas. Based on "The Kennel Murder Case" by S. S. VanDine. Screen play by Tom Reed. Direction by William Clemens. Warner Bros.

Murder and the sale of aeroplane plans to a foreign country cause *Philo Vance* to put his wits to work to find the guilty parties. Henry Stephenson is, as usual, most convincing as the suave, clever detective. The story is an entertaining one of the series.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Questionable

Children, 8 to 12 No

CHASING TROUBLE ◇ ◇

Frankie Darro, Marjorie Reynolds, George Cleveland, Mantan Moreland, Alex Callam, Milburn Stone. Screen play by Mary McCarthy. Direction by Howard Bretherton. Monogram.

This is a "quickie" which, like many of its class, is meant for an unsophisticated audience. The technique belongs to a period of about five years ago, but the plot has timely interest since it concerns a group of spies engaged in blowing up munitions plants and airplane factories. The leader uses as his tools, beautiful and innocent girls who convey signals by the hue, size, and composition of corsages they wear at his bidding. Why signals are necessary when the group meets freely at an apartment is not explained. A newspaper man and "Cupid," who delivers the flowers and studies graphology, save the day and bring the criminals face to face with justice. Frankie Darro is a pert, bright-eyed youth on the order of a younger James Cagneys, Marjorie Reynolds is a personable lass, and the colored boy, Mantan Moreland, deserves and receives a number of laughs.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable

Children, 8 to 12 Might take it seriously and be alarmed

GOOSE STEP ◇ ◇

Roland Drew, Steffi Duna, Greta Grandstedt, Alan Ladd. Screen play by Shepard Traube. Direction by Sherman Scott. Produced by Producers Producing Corporation. Released by Producers Distributing Corporation.

Using most of the tricks known to propagandists to fan hatred, this picture, formerly titled "Hitler, Beast of Berlin," comes to the screen under the new title of "Goose Step." With harrowing reality it depicts the abuse of German citizens of the Reich who have been caught by the Gestapo plotting to overthrow the present regime. Whether or not it is true, it serves no good purpose by rehearsing before the public the sickening brutalities practiced at a German concentration camp, and such a picture should have no place upon the American screen.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Absolutely no

Children, 8 to 12 Frightful

GRANNY, GET YOUR GUN ◇ ◇

May Robson, Harry Davenport, Margot Stevenson, Hardie Albright, Clem Bevans. Original screen play by Kenneth Gamet, based on a story by Erle Stanley Gardner. Direction by George Amy. Warner Bros.-First National.

May Robson as an astute, belligerent, soft-hearted old Western pioneer woman, returns to Nevada with a granddaughter who is seeking a divorce and finds herself mixed up in a murder mystery. She plays the role with the utmost zest and all the humor that could be read into such a part. The film is very light farcical entertainment with a Western flavor. There are no unpleasant details of crime shown, and emphasis is entirely on the humorous situations.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable because of humorous treatment

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

THE GRAPES OF WRATH ◇ ◇

Henry Fonda, Jane Darwell, John Carradine, Charley Grapewin, Doris Bowden, Russell Simpson, O. Z. Whitehead, John Qualen, Eddie Quillan, Zeffie Tilbury, Frank Sully, Frank Darien, Darryl Hickman, Shirley Mills, Roger Imhof, Grant Mitchell, Charles D. Brown, John Arledge, Ward Bond, Harry Tyler. Based on the novel by John Steinbeck. Screen play by Nunnally Johnson. Direction by John Ford. Produced by Darryl F. Zanuck. Associate producer Nunnally Johnson. 20th Century-Fox.

It is impossible to imagine a more heart-breaking story of poverty, injustice and despair than John Steinback's "The Grapes of Wrath"; and the film, superbly acted, photographed and directed, is no less desolate. Although it omits the most shocking incidents and tones down the dialogue, it perserves the spirit and the message of the book intact. In its widest implications the tragedy of the *Joad* family's migration from Oklahoma to California is a startling indictment of America's inadequacy in handling the problem of evicted sharecroppers, the shortsightedness of those who were responsible for allowing the situation in the "dustbowl" to develop, and the failure of the states to evolve a comprehensive plan to meet an emergency which might have been anticipated. But Steinbeck's masterly pen has created such a realistic and emotional picture of the *Joad's* experiences in California that, as is always the case when propaganda is skilfully presented, one loses sight of the greater problem in horrified acceptance of a single aspect. As literary, pictorial, and histrionic art, the film reaches pinnacles of perfection. Whether such a work is obligated to tell "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," may be left to estheticians and moralists to debate.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No. Needs adult evaluation

Children, 8 to 12 Impossible

GREEN HELL ◇ ◇

Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Joan Bennett, John Howard, George Sanders, Alan Hale, George Bancroft, Vincent Price, Ray Mala, Peter Bronte. Original story and screen play by Frances Marion. Direction by James Whale. Universal.

Six men of divergent types set out from the Brazilian border town of Tabatinga through the jungle in search of Inca temples, tombs, and treasure. They locate mounds which prove to be the ruins they seek and spend a year in excavation work. Up to this point the story is rather interesting both in setting and in the portrayal of the various men of the expedition. In the unfolding of the plot, however, when a woman comes to the camp, the reactions of the men to her presence, the implausible characterization given the role by Miss Bennett and the sentimental, banal, dialogue turn an adventure story of some novelty into an absurdly incredible love story with a spectacular and melodramatic ending. Several scenes draw laughter certainly not intended by the producers. A destructive tropical storm, the siege by native head hunters, and adventurous hokum may find admirers among the less mature audiences.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Of doubtful interest

Children, 8 to 12 Too exciting and no value

❖

HE MARRIED HIS WIFE ◇ ◇

Joel McCrea, Nancy Kelly, Roland Young, Mary Boland, Cesar Romero, Mary Healy, Lyle Talbot. Screen play by Sam Hellman, Darrell Ware, Lynn Starling and John O'Hara. Direction by Roy Del Ruth. 20th Century-Fox.

In this utterly absurd "screw-ball" comedy, divorce serves again as the springboard from which we dive into a sea of diverting sequences treating marital infelicity as the supreme joke. This is one of Hollywood's most overworked subjects for comedy, but except for one sequence where the heroine resorts to smashing furniture, good direction, sparkling dialogue, an able cast, and really amusing situations combine to give the picture freshness and wit. The novel idea which furnished the motive for the plot is a divorced man's scheme to avoid alimony by maneuvering his ex-wife into a second marriage.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

HIGH SCHOOL ◇ ◇

Jane Withers, Joe Brown, Jr., Lloyd Corrigan, Claire Du Brey, Lynn Roberts, Paul Harvey, Cliff Edwards. Direction by George Nicholls, Jr. 20th Century-Fox.

This film follows the precept that in order to grow into a desirable citizen and to adjust himself to various social patterns, a child must have the companionship of his contem-

poraries. In the case of *Jane Wallace,* the adjustment is a slow and painful process because a succession of tutors, an indulgent father and friendly ranch hands have contributed toward her being a problem child. Her father decides to send her to high school. By the devious methods best known to children of this age, her schoolmates divert *Jane's* precocious, mischievous tendencies into channels which coincide with normal high school life. The picture can be recommended for children because its shafts are aimed at smart Alecs and their like, yet the preachment is not so obvious as to lose entertainment value for them. Considering her years before the camera. Jane Withers overacts consistently and is guilty of exaggerated facial expression where restraint would have been more telling. Other members of an excellent cast avoid this fault, especially Joe Brown, Jr., a find in awkward, befreckeled, toothy adolescence.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

❖

THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS ◇ ◇

Sir Cedric Hardwicke, Vincent Price, Nan Grey, John Sutton, Cecil Kellaway, Alan Napier, Forrester Harvey. Screen play by Lester Cole and Kurt Siodmak. Story by Joe May and Kurt Siodmak, a sequel to "The Invisible Man" by H. G. Wells. Direction by Joe May. Universal.

Camera tricks come into their own in this fantastic melodrama. Cleverly imaginative in plot, it is still gruesome, for it concerns the experiments of a doctor who, moved by pity, evolves a formula which creates invisibility for a man unjustly convicted of murder. He then frantically tries to find an antidote for the process which is causing insanity in the victim. The film is interesting in its technical devices and holds attention throughout. Its entertainment value is largely a matter of taste.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Doubtful **Children, 8 to 12** Terrifying

❖

I TAKE THIS WOMAN ◇ ◇

Spencer Tracy, Hedy LaMarr, Verree Teasdale, Kent Taylor, Laraine Day, Mona Barrie, Paul Cavanagh, Louis Calhern, Frances Drake. Screen play by James Kevin McGuiness from an original story by Charles MacArthur. Direction by W. S. Van Dyke II. M. G. M.

"I Take This Woman" depends principally upon the beauty and appeal of Miss LaMarr, backed by the strength of Spencer Tracy's ability and his popularity at the box office. The tried and true formula of the unselfish doctor devoting his life to work in a slum clinic with medical research in his spare moments, is again used. Returning from an expedition, *Dr. Decker* meets *Georgi* on board ship and saves her from suicide attempted because of an unhappy love affair with a married man. Their lives thenceforth are linked when she turns to him for solace and help. He falls in love with her and marries her although aware of her love for the other man, and in order to provide her with the material things to which she has been accustomed, gives up his work at the clinic to become a society doctor. At this point the film elaborates upon an idea traditional in movies that a financially successful doctor is unethical if not a quack, and that hospitals are graft-ridden institutions. When *Dr. Decker* finally sees the error of his ways, he returns to labor among the poor. Although certain situations are so trite as to be almost laughable, the picture probably will have popular appeal with the glamorous Miss LaMarr and virile Mr. Tracy propping up the weak story.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too sophisticated **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

LITTLE OLD NEW YORK ◇ ◇

Alice Faye, Fred MacMurray, Richard Greene, Brenda Joyce, Andy Devine, Henry Stephenson, Fritz Field. Screen play by Harry Tugend. Direction by Henry King. Darryl F. Zanuck.

So great and important a theme as Robert Fulton's invention of the steamboat might well have received more serious treatment than it is given in "Little Old New York." In this respect the picture falls short of its possibilities. One follows the charming and brilliant young inventor, delightfully portrayed by Richard Greene, through the disappointments and trials that beset him, not the least of which are the ridicule and scoffing of those who stand in the way of progress. While the hero wins admiration for his persevering belief in himself and his ideas,, the picture lacks compelling appeal. The comedy relief, furnished by Alice Faye, as the mistress of the inn where Fulton stays, and by her admirer, played by Fred McMurray, is stressed to the point where it detracts from the main theme. Henry Stephenson gives a first-class performance as the benign, sympathetic, patron who furnishes to Fulton the necessary financial assistance for the development of his invention. The film does not pretend to accuracy in presenting the events of Fulton's life, but it has an atmosphere of authenticity. Unimportant in the field of historical films, it is nevertheless acceptable popular entertainment .

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Mature

❖

MUTINY ON THE BLACKHAWK ◇ ◇

Richard Arlen, Andy Devine, Constance Moore, Noah Beery. Screen play by Michael L. Simmons. Direction by Christy Cabanne. Musical direction by Charles Previn. Producers, Universal.

Illegal slave traffic, starvation and mutiny

on board a slave ship, a forced landing in Lower California, and encounters with Mexican troops make an exciting action picture. Though not authentic, the story parallels historic happenings of the 1840's closely enough to give it more than passing interest. It is a rather grim and unrelieved account of cruelty and violence and deprivation, but well enough acted and directed to appeal to audiences who are fond of red-blooded seagoing drama.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

PINOCCHIO ◇ ◇

Walt Disney production from the story by Collodi. Photographed in Technicolor. RKO.

Mr. Disney's second feature-length cartoon is another triumph of imagination and technical skill, bringing to the screen a beloved children's classic and presenting to the public several new, delightful personalities to take their places among other world-famous Disney characters. *Mr. Jiminy Cricket,* the whimsical little creature who acts as narrator for the film and as conscience for *Pinocchio, Cleo,* the flirtatious gold fish, and the playful kitten, *Figaro,* are as lovable and as humorous as any of their older brothers in celluloid. That the picture, with all its breath-taking perfection of color and drawing, is not quite so joyously entertaining as one could wish, is probably due to the fact that the story itself deals mostly with *Pinocchio's* unhappy experiences and that one misses the light-heartedness and the idyllic quality that have characterized so many of the Disney creations in the past. Though in the end *Pinocchio* has changed from a wooden puppet to a real little boy through bravery, truthfulness and unselfishness, during the picture one sees him lured away from the lovable woodcarver by the wicked fox, imprisoned in a cage by *Stromboli,* a horrible monster of a man, locked up at *Pleasure Island* in company with an obnoxious youth, and tempted to drink, smoke, and play pool while he is slowly being transformed into the image of a donkey. The sequences having to do with the rescue of *Gepetto* from the belly of the whale have some lovely pictures of undersea life, but the terrifying lunges of the whale amid towering waves are confusing, noisy, and monotonous and would undoubtedly terrify a sensitive child. *Pinocchio* himself, though a nice little fellow, has a part which gives him too little opportunity to win the love of his audience. The film as a whole, however, is an enchanting piece of artistry well worth seeing for its wealth of fascinating detail as well as for its dramatization of a widely read book.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent **Children, 8 to 12** Entertaining in part but tiring and confusing for the younger ones

❖

THE SAINT'S DOUBLE TROUBLE ◇ ◇

George Sanders, Helene Whitney, Jonathan Hale, Bela Lugosi Donald MacBride, John F. Hamilton, Thomas W. Ross, Elliott Sullivan. Screen play by Ben Holmes from the story by Leslie Charteris. Direction by Jack Hively. RKO-Radio Pictures, Inc.

This is another chapter in the movie series dealing with the amazing adventures of *The Saint,* former criminal, since turned detective. It has an obscure, complicated plot about diamond smuggling and murder which only mystery story fans can follow.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

SANTA FE MARSHAL ◇ ◇

William Boyd, Russell Hayden, Bernadine Hayes, Marjorie Rambeau. Direction by Leslie Selander. Paramount.

Hopalong Cassidy, actually representing the law although masquerading as an ex-convict, succeeds, after a very narrow escape, in rounding up a gang of murderers and thieves. The presence of a medicine show adds romance and humor to the situation. The picture is an average Western.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Harmless

❖

SIDEWALKS OF LONDON ◇ ◇

Charles Laughton, Vivien Leigh, Rex Harrison, Larry Adler, Tyrone Guthrie. From the story "St. Martin's Kane" by Clemence Dane. Direction by Tim Whelan. Music by Arthur Johnston. A Pommer-Laughton Mayflower Production. Released by Paramount Studios.

This production is so extremely British that it may not appeal to Americans who are unfamiliar with its London setting and the class of people to which its characters belong. Charles Laughton, however, is well liked by American audiences and in this film is given the most human and sympathetic role he has played since *Ruggles.* He is cast as *Charles Staggers,* a street entertainer who makes his living "busking" (entertaining theatre patrons while they await admission). One day he sees a street waif snatch coppers from his hat and steal a gold cigarette case from a man near by. He follows her home, becomes altruistically interested in her, and makes her a member of his troupe of entertainers. The story then tells of the girl's rise to fame on the stage, her delayed awakening to a sense of gratitude, and the effects of her conduct upon *Charles.* Mr. Laughton's inter-

pretation of the character of *Charles* is extremely fine, Miss Leigh gives a thoroughly artistic performance as the cockney waif, and the supporting cast is excellent. Since the plot is not unusual, interest depends largely on the character portrayals and the atmosphere details. As in several previous films, Mr. Laughton gives a stirring recitation of a familiar selection, this time Kipling's "If."

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Mature and depressing

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON ◇ ◇

Thomas Mitchell, Edna Best, Freddie Bartholomew, Terry Kilburn, Tim Holt, Baby Bobby Quillan, Christian Rub, John Wray, Herbert Rawlinson. From the novel by Johann David Wyss. Screen play by Walter Ferris, Gene Towne, Graham Baker. Direction by Edward Ludwig. Produced by Gene Towne and Graham Baker. A "The Play's the Thing" production. RKO.

The cinema version of Johann David Wyss' beloved story of the Swiss family who were shipwrecked and stranded on a tropical island is really quite successful. There is an interesting motivation for *Mr. Robinson's* decision to emigrate to Australia which gives point to their experiences. *William Robinson,* pere, an idealist, is disheartened by the war fervor raging in England in the 19th century and by the atmosphere of social decadence. Seeing his sons growing up with undesirable traits fostered by contemporary social conditions, he sells his home and business and with his rebellious family sets out for the colony of Australia. The shipwreck en route forces each member to become industrious, self-reliant, and dependable; and family love and solidarity are reawakened during the year of isolation. Much of the spirit of the book is kept and many familiar scenes are re-enacted.

The film is spectacular in setting and delightful in theme and lightened by simple and engaging humor. Judicious cutting of a few sequences would improve it but, without real dramatic conflict, the human story holds interest consistently. Thomas Mitchell and the boys are well cast. The mother's role departs from the original character of the book and is not especially sympathetic. Miss Best, in spite of sincerity, does not embue it with vitality. Those who recall the book and liked it will find that memory will enlarge on the necessarily sketchy outline of the family's adventures and accomplishments. They will invest the film with an aura others may not see, but is, in any event, a very pleasant idyl. The pertinent similarity of the ills of that day, from which the *Robinson's* were fleeing, to those of today may afford moderns the wish that they too might find a similar retreat in a land of such miraculous plenty and rare beauty.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good

Children, 8 to 12 Good

❖

SHORT SUBJECT

MIGHTY HUNTERS ◇ ◇

One reel. First of a series of "Canyon Kiddies" by Jimmy Swinnerton. "Merrie Melodie." Schlesinger Studio-Warner Bros.

The well known "Canyon Kiddies" make their film debut in this delightful single reel feature in which the diminutive Indians on a "big hunt" find a startling surprise awaiting them. The story is splendid for children, as it has no element of fear to distract them, and in addition the beauty and authenticity of the settings should develop a greater appreciation of the beauty of nature. Mr. Swinnerton is a widely known cartoonist, but he is also recognized as a successful painter of desert scenes. Introducing a new technique in this film, he has used oil as a medium in painting backgrounds and has faithfully pictured actual scenes, adding authentic loveliness to a type of film most loved by children. This innovation is comparable to the work of publishers who in late years have engaged famous artists to illustrate children's books, and it may be the first step forward in the march of progress toward more artistic films for children. This short is a delightful interlude on any program.

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FEATURE FILMS

—o—

Blondie on A Budget
Charlie Chan in Panama
Dr. Erlich's Magic Bullet
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The Ghost Comes Home
The House of Seven Gables
The Marines Fly High
My Little Chickadee
Northwest Passage
Road to Singapore
Seventeen
Strange Cargo
Three Cheers for the Irish
Vigil in the Night
Women Without Names
Young as You Feel
Young Tom Edison

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FEATURE FILMS

BLONDIE ON A BUDGET ◇ ◇

Penny Singleton, Arthur Lake, Larry Simms, Rita Hayworth, Danny Mummert. Story by Charles Molyneux Brown. Screen play by Richard Flournoy. Based on Chic Young's Comic strip. Columbia. Direction by Frank R. Strayer.

Like other *Blondie* pictures, this is very light entertainment and has occasional touches of caricature as a throw-back to the source in the funnies. It is not overdone, however, and the simple plot concerns things which might happen to any young couple in the suburbs. The current episode tells of the *Bumpsteads'* struggles to live within a budget when *Dagwood* wants a trout club membership costing two hundred dollars and *Blondie* yearns for a fur coat at approximately the same price. Jealousy disrupts the household when a former sweetheart of *Dagwood* appears on the scene, but this trouble also takes flight at the end. The two children, insufferable *Alvin,* and the appealing *Baby Dumpling,* as well as the comical dog, add to the fun.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 Family squabbles not a good theme.

CHARLIE CHAN IN PANAMA ◇ ◇

Sidney Toler, Jean Rogers, Lionel Atwill, Mary Nash, Sen Yung, Kane Richmond. Based on the character created by Earl Derr Biggers. Screen play by John Larkin and Lester Ziffren. Direction by Norman Foster. 20th Century-Fox.

A party of tourists flying across the Panama Canal to Balboa are each and every one under surveillance by *Charlie Chan* as possible spies attempting to sabotage ships of the U.S. Navy on their passage through the locks. This thought is not too heartening in the present state of the world. Numerous murders, searching sallies, lock-ups, and chases result in great excitement and suspense. At the conclusion, the least suspicious character is found guilty, per formula, but one is left in mid-air because there is no explanation of the participation of others in the spy ring. Some of the *Chan* pictures have seemed much better. Is it possible that we are growing weary of them?

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable

Children, 8 to 12 Too violent

DR. ERLICH'S MAGIC BULLET ◇ ◇

Edward G. Robinson, Ruth Gordon, Otto Kruger, Donald Crisp, Maria Ouspenskaya, Albert Basserman. Original screen play by Heinz Herald and Norman Burnside. Direction by William Dieterle. Warner Bros.

If Warner Brothers had named this film simply "Dr. Erlich" and had treated it as a biography of the medical genius whose experiments with the use of analine dyes it would still have been extremely interesting; but in naming it for Dr. Erlich's discovery and in focusing interest upon a series of infinitely painstaking experiments, they have made medical research an exciting adventure and the triumph of ideas more thrilling than any man's personal problems could possibly have been. One follows with interest the disappointments and achievements of the young Jewish doctor from his first experiments with the use of analine dyes in diagnosis to his discovery years later of the "Magic Bullet." It is significant, however, that the climax of the film is reached through a sequence showing a succession of numbered bottles on a shelf. Although it is known beforehand that number 606 will provide the answer, the audience sighs with genuine relief when the successful formula is at last discovered.

Edward Robinson presents a restrained, sensitive and thoroughly convincing portrait of *Dr. Erlich.* Ruth Gordon is just right in the role of his self-effacing wife; Albert Basserman is perfect as *Dr. Koch,* the older scientist; and Madame Maria Ouspenskaya is delectable in a part that is all too brief. The film is inspiring as well as absorbingly interesting.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Mature, but interesting and worth while for high school age

Children, 8 to 12
No interest, and too mature

❖

THE FARMER'S DAUGHTER ◇ ◇

Martha Raye, Charlie Ruggles, Richard Denning, Gertrude Michael, William Frawley. Screen play by Lewis R. Foster, based on a story by Delmar Daves. Direction by James Hogan. Paramount.

Big-mouthed, awkward, raucous Martha Raye is the darling of many movie-goers who may be disappointed to find her more genteel and more comely than usual. The rest of the audience will not accept her with or without sugar coating. The play is a variation of the plot about an understudy who supercedes a temperamental leading lady, the variation consisting of the substitution of a summer theatre for a Broadway playhouse. Charlie Ruggles is handicapped by banal lines and situations, and the other actors get through their parts somehow.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Yes, if they like Raye

Children, 8 to 12
Not very suitable

THE GHOST COMES HOME ◇ ◇

Frank Morgan, Billie Burke, Ann Rutherford, John Shelton, Reginald Owen, Donald Meek, Nat Pendleton, Frank Albertson. Screen play by Richard Maibaum and Harry Ruskin, based on play by Georg Kaiser. Direction by William Thiele. M. G. M.

This is a comedy of small town life and domestic tribulations and is concerned with people who for the most part do not enlist audience sympathy. The plot hinges on the reappearance of a man supposed to have been lost at sea and who returns after insurance has been collected for his death. He is a weak, "white rabbit" soul, continually abused by his associates and not respected even by his family. It is an unfortunate vehicle for Frank Morgan's talents, and Billie Burke seems miscast as a domineering head of a household. There are a few laughs but the trouble seems to be in a disjointed story which does not have the human touch.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Waste of time

Children, 8 to 12
No

❖

THE HOUSE OF SEVEN GABLES ◇ ◇

George Sanders, Margaret Lindsay, Vincent Price, Dick Foran, Nan Grey. Based on the novel by Nathaniel Hawthorne. Adaptation by Harold Greene. Screen play by Lester Cole. Direction by Joe May. Universal.

Sometimes pictures such as this which are presented without the eclat of big stars and elaborately assembled settings are surprisingly satisfactory. Much of the feeling of Hawthorne is retained in this story of the *Puncheons,* the strange, half-melancholy, shadowed mood with a touch of superstition and once in a while the warmth of human kindness and love to make life endurable in a harshly judging New England community. An early *Puncheon* had caused the death of one *Matthew Maule* to satisfy his own greed, and the curse of the victim descended upon the evil-doers of the *Puncheon* line for many generations. It is still potent at the time of this story, the first half of the nineteenth century when one brother tries to destroy another to gain posession of the seven-gables house and the deed to an immense land grant which he believes is hidden in the walls. All parts are well played as if the actors were always aware of the period of history in which they move. George Sanders is a fine, lip-curling villain. Mention should be made of the change of appearance of Margaret Lindsay and Vincent Price who grow older very naturally due to both acting and excellence of make-up.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Yes

Children, 8 to 12
Too sombre

THE MARINES FLY HIGH ◇ ◇

Richard Dix, Chester Morris, Lucille Ball, Steffi Duna, John Eldredge. Screen play by Jerry Cady and Lt. Commander A. J. Bolton. Direction by George Nicholls, Jr., and Ben Stoloff. R. K. O.-Radio.

A high-sounding preamble states that this is a tribute to the brave men who brought a stable government to a certain country below our border—now guess which one. The film is one of those romantic, melodramatic things with crossed love affairs, two men in love with one girl and two girls in love with one man, also wild pursuits of natives by airplanes and sieges in adobe huts. The natives bite the dust, but the white men almost never get hit. Chester Morris is cheeky but brave under fire and Richard Dix behaves nobly in the crucial moments to garner his just reward; Steffi Duna plays the temptress, Lucille Ball the nice girl from home.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Fair adventure film

Children, 8 to 12 Better not

❖

MY LITTLE CHICKADEE ◇ ◇

Mae West, W. C. Fields, Joseph Calleia, Dick Foran, Donald Meek, Fuzzy Knight, Margaret Hamilton, Ruth Donnelly. Screen play by Mae West and W. C. Fields. Direction by Edward Cline. Universal.

It is our private opinion, thus publicly expressed, that neither Universal nor the Hays Office can possibly be proud of "My Little Chickadee." We thought, too, that there was a code which deftly steered ambitious authors out of dangerous waters. Whatever Mae West and Mr. Fields may have to offer the entertainment world, their forte is certainly not writing screen plays. The one they have evolved together not only is dull but also has such amazingly banal dialogue that one looks immediately for double meanings. If the idea of the film is to satirize glorified Westerns, this significance is lost in the trite situations, while the lines and the romantic scenes only emphasize the vulgarities. Miss West's first picture was a broad and laughable burlesque. It was not sentimental and it made no concession to reality. But when the producers allow her to romanticize the character she insists on playing it becomes offensive. If one has never seen it possibly its crudeness will inspire startled laughter but those who saw "She Done Him Wrong" can realize that that film was unique and that the role should now be laid away in lavendar forever.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

NORTHWEST PASSAGE (Book 1—Rogers' Rangers) ◇ ◇

Spencer Tracy, Robert Young, Walter Brennan, Ruth Hussey, Nat Pendleton, Regis Toomey, Louis Hector. Screen play by Lawrence Stallings and Talbot Jennings, based on novel by Kenneth Roberts. Musical score by Herbert Stothart. Direction by King Vidor. M. G. M.

"Northwest Passage" limits itself to the first half of Kenneth Robert's novel, Book 1. It tells the story of how the Rogers' Rangers, in 1759, carried out a punitive expedition against the marauding Indians, who, during the French and Indian Wars, massacred and tortured settlers in the wilderness of the Northern Colonies. It is a story of magnificent achievement over natural and enemy hazards, accomplished by superhuman courage and stamina. The emotional tension mounts to a climax when those Rangers who have stood up under the strain of the terrible march reach the stronghold of the Abenakis and slaughter the entire encampment. The heartbreaking return march is in the nature of an anticlimax, but it is none the less moving, for it emphasizes again the bitter struggles of our forefathers to master their surroundings. The film is a fine historical document realistically presenting the determined efforts of the pioneers in the making of this nation.

Technicolor adds immeasurably to the impressiveness of the picture. Backgrounds similar to the original virgin country of New York where the action took place were found in Idaho, and they are breathtaking in their beauty. The magnificence of the landscape, however, does not dwarf the human element. Through all the hazardous adventures, the rugged simplicity of the acting gives a feeling of reality rarely felt in this type of film. The role of *Major Rogers* is magnificently played by Spencer Tracy. The character is virile, fearless, ingenious, and withal kind. The film gives a splendid example of respect for authority and unquestioning acceptance of discipline, even though it may involve seeming cruelty to the individual.

The cast includes more than fifty speaking parts, and it is difficult to single out any for especial praise since they all fit so perfectly into the picture. Robert Young in the taxing role of *Langdon Towne,* a fugitive from high-handed Colonial justice, and Walter Brennan as his loyal friend, give distinctive performances.

"Northwest Passage" is a great tale of sensational adventure, terrible physical hardships, and frontier cruelty. It is a visualized page of Colonial history showing the stamina and courage of the men who helped to build America, and it is well worth seeing.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Fine, unless too emotional

Children, 8 to 12 Too exciting

ROAD TO SINGAPORE ◇ ◇

Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, Dorothy Lamour, Charles Colburn, Judith Barrett. Screen play by Don Hartman and Frank Butler, based on story by Harry Hervey. Direction by Victor Schertzinger. Paramount.

Bing Crosby and Bob Hope make an engaging team and bring fresh, spontaneous humor to a simple little story of no great dramatic stature. Bing, as a laughter loving, adventurous playboy, heir to a huge steamship concern, refuses to settle down to matrimony and business. With an equally irresponsible pal he escapes on a freighter and disembarks on a South Sea Island. There they become involved in typical musical comedy escapades which are both jolly and tuneful. The personalities of the two comedians put over this bit of entertainment which provides pleasant relaxation from serious reflections.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

❖

SEVENTEEN ◇ ◇

Jackie Cooper, Betty Field, Otto Kruger, Ann Shoemaker, Norma Nelsch. Based on Booth Tarkington's story. Screen play by Agnes Christine Johnston and Stuart Palmer. Direction by Luois King. Paramount.

Brought down to date from the horse-and-buggy days, Tarkington's "Seventeen" has a certain universality of appeal which makes it plausible today, although the modernization is not brilliantly successful. It is probably a play which is more amusing to the parents of the seventeeners than to those who are feeling the first pangs of love and jealousy, living through experiences which seem all important. Jackie Cooper fills the part of William Baxter in a very natural manner; Betty Field is attractive but rather too obvious as the immature siren. On the whole it is light and pleasing comedy but not outstanding.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** No real interest

❖

STRANGE CARGO ◇ ◇

Joan Crawford, Clark Gable, Ian Hunter, Peter Lorre, Paul Lucas, Albert Dekker, J. Edward Bromberg, Eduardo Cianelli, John Arledge, Frederick Worlock, Bernard Nedell, Victor Varconi. Based on book "Not Too Narrow, Not Too Deep" by Richard Sale. Screen play by Lawrence Hazard. Directed by Frank Borzage. Produced by Joseph L. Mankiewicz. M. G. M.

A darkly sombre setting of a penal colony in South America and the brutal characters consistent with the setting, make a surprising background for the spiritual motif of this plot. A mysterious and Christ-like stranger joins a group of prisoners determined to escape through the jungle to the sea and freedom. They encounter terrible hardships. The characters of the men and the one woman involved are clearly individualized, and their idiosyncrasies and bitterly warped social attitudes are frankly and vividly presented. By force of his personality and his super-human ability to guide them in their dangerous flight, the stranger, *Cambeau,* gradually brings the group to an acknowledgment of their mis-spent lives and, to all but one, regeneration. The theme is developed without preachment or sentimentality. *Cambeau,* played by Ian Hunter, is serene, gentle, mystical but powerful, and the symbolism is in keeping with the modern interpretation of Christ's character. Clark Gable, as *Verne,* has little opportunity to lighten the sombre effect, but he is capable in a less sympathetic role than usually falls to his lot. Joan Crawford brings sincerity and dramatic verity to a drab role. The other characters are all unique, brutal, clear cut, and splendidly presented. The storm scene is theatrical but it makes a stunning background for an emotional climax.

The theme will carry a significant message for many, but for others the unusual surroundings, violent action, and vicious characters will make it seem less applicable to present day life. It is a powerful and unconventional film, most suitable for adult appreciation.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too drab and mature **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

THREE CHEERS FOR THE IRISH ◇ ◇

Priscilla Lane, Thomas Mitchell, Dennis Morgan, Virginia Grey, Irene Hervey, Alan Hale, William Lundigan, Frank Jenks, Henry Armetta. Original screen play by Richard Macaulay and Jerry Wald. Direction by Lloyd Bacon. Warner Bros.-First National.

Loud and noisy buffoonery and slapstick combined with really human comedy provide laughs for all ages. However either the film play is badly written or the direction is at fault, for the theme might have held real appeal had it been toned down to a more natural pitch. After twenty-five years on the police force *Patrolman Casey* is retired without warning to give place to a younger man and, to make the pill harder to take, a Scotchman! *Casey* returns home to an anniversary celebration given by his daughters and his friends, all of whom are expecting him to announce his promotion. The adjustment to his changed position and his later interest in ward politics are human and entertaining in spite of the shouting, the brawling, and the absurdly fostered antagonism between the Irishman and the Scotchman which makes the basis of the plot. Thomas Mitchell and Alan Hale play exaggerated characters which are difficult to recognize. Dennis Morgan is a pleasant contrast, a wholly delightful suitor for Priscilla Lane, who, with Virginia Grey and Irene Hervey, completes the pleasant family group.

In spite of obvious faults, "Three Cheers for the Irish" is amusing and offers light entertainment for many.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes — **Children, 8 to 12** Unobjectionable

❖

VIGIL IN THE NIGHT ◇ ◇

Carole Lombard, Brian Aherne, Anne Shirley, Julian Mitchell, Robert Coote, Brenda Forbes, Peter Cushing, Doris Lloyd. From the novel by A. J. Cronin. Screen play by Fred Guiol, P. J. Wolfson, Rowland Leigh. Direction by George Stevens. R. K. O.

A. J. Cronin's novel presented a dreary and yet heroic picture of ill equipped English nursing institutions. The film, using this background, highlights the personalities rather than the situations and becomes a study of a woman's passionate devotion to her profession and of her fierce loyalty to a frivolous younger sister, which causes her to assume the blame for an act of criminal negligence on the girl's part. Unfortunately her self sacrifice seems unjustifiable, and audience sympathy is strained to the utmost to accept as necessary the situations which arise to attest the heroine's fine character and emphasize the high ethics of the medical and nursing profession.

Miss Lombard in a straight dramatic role is excellent, as is also Anne Shirley. Brian Aherne in the character of a physician who has dedicated his life to service is most convincing. The film though interesting will have a limited appeal because the theme is not significant enough to outweigh its depressing qualities.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too emotional and mature — **Children, 8 to 12** Unsuitable

❖

WOMEN WITHOUT NAMES ◇ ◇

Ellen Drew, Robert Paige, Judith Barrett, John Miljan, Fay Helm. Based on a play by Ernest Booth. Screen play by William R. Lipman and Horace McCoy. Direction by Robert Florey. Paramount.

In the extended list of prison films the producers have come a long way from the adage: "It is the primary function of a picture to entertain." Morbid, harrowing, nerve-shattering, these films add nothing but depression to a world which has too much suffering and despair. "Women Without Names" has a hackneyed, stupid plot. It is the old tear-jerker about innocent people framed into prison and the shadow of the death house. Most of the scenes are enacted behind the bars. At the end comes an escape from prison so melodramatic as to be farcical, a visit to a wicked district attorney who hesitates to free the prisoner lest he damage his political chances, and the intervention of an intrepid newspaper editor who bares the truth.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Pernicious — **Children, 8 to 12** Very bad

YOUNG AS YOU FEEL ◇ ◇

Jed Prouty, Spring Byington, Joan Valerie, Russell Gleason, Ken Howell, George Ernest, June Carlson, Florence Roberts, Billy Mahan, Helen Ericson, Harry Shannon. Based on the play "Merry Andrew" by Lewis Beach. Screen play by Joseph Hoffman and Stanley Rauh. Direction by Malcolm St. Clair. 20th Century-Fox.

Here are the *Joneses* again with new joys and new troubles, not very brilliant, not very original but so familiar that criticizing them is like talking about the family next door At this particular time *Father Jones* is persuaded to sell his drug store and retire. After a few days of enforced idleness he is willing to take the entire tribe to see the Fair, but New York proves so full of night clubs, champagne and parasites that the family is glad to go home again. Good and bad qualities of the production strike a fairly equal balance, but if it is supposed to represent a typical American family one could wish the worthwhile traits of its characters were portrayed in a less comic-strip fashion.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes — **Children, 8 to 12** Not much interest

❖

YOUNG TOM EDISON ◇ ◇

Mickey Rooney, Fay Bainter, George Bancroft, Virginia Weidler, Eugene Pallette, Victor Kilian, Bobbie Jordan, J. M. Kerrigan, Lloyd Corrigan, John Kellog, Clem Bevans, Eily Malyon, Harry Shannon. Direction by Norman Taurog. M. G. M.

"Young Tom Edison" is the kind of biographical picture which will be greatly enjoyed by Americans of all ages, for it depicts the boyhood of a man who represents almost everything that Americans like best to idealize: grit, ingenuity, intellectual integrity, and the ability to succeed against great odds. Mickey Rooney makes the young genius a lovable, understandable boy whose precociousness never seems abnormal, although it was sadly misinterpreted by many of the townspeople until an act of heroism won him their approbation. The incidents of his life which were used in the picture, if not entirely accurate, are all based on fact; and the hokum, obviously introduced for the sake of dramatic effect, is probably a necessary addition to this type of picture if it is to have wide audience appeal. The whole cast is excellent: Fay Bainter is ideal as the mother; Virginia Weidler is a most delightful little sister; George Bancroft is admirable as the father whose failure to understand his son is nicely balanced by his love for his family and his faith in his wife's motherly wisdom. Upon Mickey Rooney's shoulders rests the greatest responsibility, and he deserves unstinted praise for an intelligent, restrained and consistent characterization.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent — **Children, 8 to 12** Good

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APRIL
1940

FEATURE FILMS

—o—

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FEATURE FILMS

AND ONE WAS BEAUTIFUL ◇ ◇

Robert Cummings, Laraine Day, Jean Muir, Billie Burke. Based on the story by Alice Duer Miller. Screen play by Harry Clork. Direction by Robert B. Sinclair. M. G. M.

This is an interesting study in contrast of character between two sisters: *Helen* who uses her angelic countenance to obtain selfish ends and to escape from unpleasant duties; and *Kate* who is not so beautiful of face but has qualities of strength and fairness and fine appreciation of the real things of life. There is rivalry between them for the love of a young man who is forced to pay for a serious accident caused by the selfish sister. The story is slightly forced, which might be remedied by skilful cutting, but the directing is unusually good, and the film becomes a very human portrayal due to the fine acting of Laraine Day and Jean Muir. Billie Burke adds a charming note as the mother of the two girls.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Possibly **Children, 8 to 12** Too mature

BEYOND TOMORROW ◇ ◇

Harry Carey, C. Aubrey Smith, Chas. Winninger, Alex Melesh, Maria Ouspenskaya, Helen Vinson, Rod LaRocque, James Houston, Jean Lawrence. Direction by A. Edward Sutherland. Screen play by Adele Comandini, from an original story by Mildred Cram and Adele Camandini. Academy Productions. RKO release.

"Beyond Tomorrow" is added to the list of recent pictures dealing with the supernatural and is probably the least successful of the group. If the standard set by the first part of the picture had been maintained, it might have been a remarkable film, since the mood for spiritual adventure is subtly maintained and all episodes are beautifully handled, but somewhere in midfield it drifts into hack writing with involved and unconvincing development of plot, and the spirits do not always succeed in remaining ghostly. The three old men of the tale, killed in an airplane accident, later return to earth to become guardian ghosts of a young couple whose affairs

need mending. Photography deserves praise, especially the night scenes with rain and snow outside, firelight within, and lights shining dimly through the windows. Music increases the emotional appeal, and the acting, which is universally good, carries the story through some weak moments.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Mature theme

Children, 8 to 12 No interest

❖

BILL OF DIVORCEMENT ◇ ◇

Maureen O'Hara, Adolphe Menjou, Fay Bainter, Herbert Marshall, Dame May Whitty, Patric Knowles, C. Aubrey Smith, Ernest Cossart, Kathryn Collier, Lauri Beatty. Screen play by Dalton Trumbo from the play by Clemence Dane. Musical score by Roy Webb. Direction by John Farrow. RKO-Radio.

The current "Bill of Divorcement" is a remake of the film, released by R. K. O. in 1932, with Katherine Hepburn, John Barrymore and Billie Burke in the cast. Although the new cast may not altogether satisfy those who saw the former picture, their ability is marked and their performance rates high praise. The theme of the play is hereditary insanity. Dread of perpetuating the taint causes a young girl to renounce marriage. The story is artistically constructed and the subject is handled in a restrained and intelligent manner. Although an unhappy emotional atmosphere is inherent in the theme, it is somewhat alleviated in the closing scene by the suggestion that the girl will eventually find satisfaction and happiness in helping her father.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Mature and depressing

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

BLACK FRIDAY ◇ ◇

Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi, Stanley Ridges, Anne Nagel, Anne Gwynne, Virginia Brissac, Edmund MacDonald, Paul Fix. Original screen play by Kurt Siodmak and Eric Taylor. Musical direction by H. J. Salter. Direction by Arthur Lubin. Universal.

Pseudo science, hypnotism, and a *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* theme provide material for this melodrama. The transplanting of portions of a criminal's brain to the brain of a conventional college professor brings about amazing consequences. The picture commences with a scene in the death chamber of a prison where a man about to be electrocuted hands his diary to a newspaper reporter. Then are shown the events leading up to the prisoner's death. Interest is derived from the working out of a purely hypothetical problem. The film is well acted and as convincing as stories of this sort ever are. In type it is on the order of the so-called horror film with its morbid atmosphere and scenes of violence.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Morbid and ethically confusing

Children, 8 to 12 Impossible

THE COURAGEOUS DR. CHRISTIAN ◇ ◇

Jean Hersholt, Dorothy Lovell, Robert Baldwin, Tom Neal, Vera Lewis, Maude Eburne. Original screen play by Ring Lardner, Jr., and Ian McLellan Hunter. Direction by Bernard Vorhaus. RKO-Radio.

Dr. Christian is again crusading, this time to move the inhabitants of a slum district along the river bank to a more salubrious location uptown, and he is so much in earnest that he is willing to marry an unappealing, ageing woman to secure the necessary real estate; in the end he is saved from the consequences of this exaggerated altruism. The film is crowded with people who fail to add a commensurate amount of interest, and the events are melodramatic and a bit shoddy. As usual, Jean Hersholt is the brave, kindly old doctor; and Vera Lewis and Maude Eburne add a delicious strain of comedy.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable

Children, 8 to 12 Too much of the seamy side of life

❖

DR. CYCLOPS ◇ ◇

(Technicolor)
Albert Dekker, Janice Logan, Thomas Coley, Charles Halton, Victor Kilian, Frank Yaconelli. Produced by Dale Van Every. Original screen play by Tom Kilpatrick. Direction by Ernest B. Schoedsack. Paramount.

The unusual achievement of the use of Technicolor along with trick photography gives this film novelty. There is a certain fascination in watching miniature human beings scuttle about trying to escape from a madman who, in conducting an experiment with radium, has reduced them to a little over a foot in height, but otherwise the film has little interest. The actors, with the exception of Albert Dekker, are very amateurish, and the picture has no charm either in incident or in character delineation to offset its unpleasantly morbid atmosphere.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Insufficent interest

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

FLORIAN ◇ ◇

Robert Young, Helen Gilbert, Charles Coburn, Lee Bowman, Reginald Owen, Lucile Watson, Irina Baronova, Soke Sakall, and Florian. Screen play by Noel Langley, Geza Herczeg and James K. McGuinness. Based on novel "Florian" by Feliz Salten. Direction by Edwin Marin. Produced by Winfield Sheehan. M. G. M.

"Florian" has aroused anticipation because of the aura of glamour which has always surrounded the Spanish Riding School of Vienna. There, through centuries, the famous Lippizan horses of the Imperial Stables have been trained and exhibited and few visitors have failed to see and marvel at the magnificent sight. In all the fading glories of the Austrian Empire this one ceremony still seems to be respected, and it was hoped that the film would recreate the actual technique of training which the horses un-

dergo. However, this is overshadowed by emphasis on plot, and in the exhibition of Robert Young in his relation to the horse *Florian* who is the real hero of the story.

True, there are beautiful scenes of racing stallions, mares and colts in the fields, and there is *Florian* going through his intricate paces in the ring. These make the film worth while. But the human story of the love of the commoner, *Anton,* for the *Duchess Diana* lacks vitality, and the plot is routine. There are swift passages of time, for the story begins before the World War, rushes through the war, the revolution in Austria, and then to America in a way which necessitates a lively imagination to follow. There is also a scene of cruelty to *Florian* which is uncalled for and out of place in so fictional a melodrama.

The role of *Anton* is not a good one for Robert Young, and Helen Gilbert is a cold and unemotional heroine. Charles Coburn is very good as *Hofer,* the veterinarian devoted to *Florian* as well as to *Anton.* Reginald Owen's makeup as *Emperor Franz Joseph* is remarkable in giving a visual impression of the monarch, but the part itself is not impressive, and little of the fascination of Imperial Vienna is caught by the production.

The film derives interest from the excellent photography of magnificent animals and from the attention it attracts to the famous Lippizan strain of horses which incidentally are now being bred in California.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes — **Children, 8 to 12** Story confusing

❖

FREE, BLOND AND TWENTY-ONE ◇ ◇

Lynn Bari, Mary Beth Hughes, Joan Davis, Henry Wilcoxon, Robert Lowery, Alan Baxter, Katherine Aldridge, Helen Ericson, Chick Chandler, Joan Valerie, Herbert Rawlinson. Screen play by Frances Hyland. Musical direction by Samuel Kaylin. Direction by Ricardo Cortez. 20th Century-Fox.

The doings of New York's career girls sometimes less flatteringly called "gold diggers," is a subject about which the average person knows little or nothing except as it is rather glamorously revealed in movies and magazine stories. Whether or not "Free, Blond and Twenty-one" is accurate, it appears to have some resemblance to real life, for the characters behave fairly logically and consistently. With the background of a "hotel for women" this film depicts a group of young women of various types, among whom are *Jerry* (Mary Beth Hughes) and *Carol* (Lynn Bari). *Jerry* goes crooked all the way through and finally involves herself in an underworld scandal. *Carol* falls in love with a worth while young doctor and settles down. Joan Davis as *Nellie,* the hotel maid, furnishes the humor and most of the common sense. The film is moderately entertaining though not particularly pleasant in retrospect.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Misleading — **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

HONEYMOON DEFERRED ◇ ◇

Edmund Lowe, Margaret Lindsay, Elisabeth Risdon, Chick Chandler, Cliff Clark, Anne Gwynn, Julie Stevens, Joyce Compton, Jerry Marlowe, Joseph Sawyer. Screen play by Roy Chanslor and Eliot Gibbons. Musical direction by H. J. Salter. Direction by Lew Landers. Universal.

This is a run-of-the-mill mystery melodrama done in comic vein with no originality in plot or characterization. A mysterious death occurs, and a bridegroom is recalled from his honeymoon to solve the question of whether it is murder or suicide. The humorous angles are somewhat forced and in poor taste.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No — **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

THE HOUSE ACROSS THE BAY ◇ ◇

George Raft, Joan Bennett, Lloyd Nolan, Gladys George, Walter Pidgeon, June Knight, Peggy Shannon, Edward Fielding, Eda McDaniels, William Wayne, Joseph Sawyer. Original story by Myles Connolly. Screen play by Kathryn Scola. Musical score and direction by Werner Janssen. Direction by Archie Mayo. Walter Wanger Production.

If you can sympathize with the wife of a gangster who loves her husband so sincerely that she sends him to Alcatraz to keep him safe from underworld enemies; if you can applaud the gangster when he escapes from prison to strangle his loving wife because he mistakenly believes that she framed him and is carrying on an affair with another man, you may find this film emotionally satisfying. It is a good example of sentimental trash rather effectively disguised by a fine cast and expensive mountings.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Most objectionable — **Children, 8 to 12** Impossible

❖

INVISIBLE STRIPES ◇ ◇

George Raft, Jane Bryan, William Holden, Humphrey Bogart, Flora Robson, Paul Kelly, Lee Patrick, Henry O'Neill, Frankie Thomas, Moroni Olsen, Margot Stevenson, Marc Lawrence, Joseph Downing, Leo Gorcey, William Haade, Tully Marshall. Story by Jonathan Finn, based on book by Warden Lewis E. Lawes. Direction by Lloyd Bacon. Musical direction by Leo E. Forbstein. Warner Bros.

This is one of several stories written by prison wardens. It treats of the problem of the paroled prisoner, who tries unsuccessfully to go straight. It is grim, realistic and depressing in the extreme. The principal characters are the ex-convict, *Cliff Taylor,* his mother, and his weakling brother *Tim.*

The mother played by Flora Robson is a fine, staunch character, who tries valiantly to help *Cliff* to rehabilitate himself and *Tim* to keep out of difficulties, but when *Tim* gets into trouble and suspicion is directed towards *Cliff,* the tragic ending is inevitable. The acting is extremely good, and the picture is better than average of its type.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

IT'S A DATE ◇ ◇

Deanna Durbin, Kay Francis, Walter Pidgeon, Eugene Pallette, Henry Stephenson, Cecilia Loftus, Samuel Hines, S. Z. Sakall, Fritz Feld, Harry Owens and his Royal Hawaiians. Original story by Jane Hall and Frederick Kohner. Screen play by Norman Krasna. Produced by Joe Pasternak. Direction by William Seiter. Universal.

Deanna Durbin is unusually fortunate in being placed in pictures which suit her personality and which, while recognizing the romantic growth of a normal young girl, do not overstress it. This is a sparkling, delightful comedy in which Deanna is cast as *Pamela Drake,* the ambitious daughter of a popular actress, who is unwittingly placed in the position of being her mother's rival for an important stage role. Her way of attempting to step aside in favor of the mother who does not know what has happened is the basis of ridiculously funny situations so cleverly presented that they seem quite within the realm of possibility. The story is excellent, and the cast enters into the action with zest and ability. Kay Francis, Walter Pidgeon and Cecilia Loftus are perfectly chosen, and of the others, S. Z. Sakall is notable as the Viennese playwrite. The beautiful songs are an integral part of the story and Harry Owens and his Royal Hawaiians are a popular addition. It is a charming, exceptionally entertaining comedy about pleasant, kindly people, and is a welcome contrast to the more sophisticated releases current today.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

❖

IT ALL CAME TRUE ◇ ◇

Ann Sheridan, Jeffrey Lynn, Humphrey Bogart, Zasu Pitts, Una O'Connor, Jessie Busley, John Litel, Grant Mitchell, Felix Bressart, Charles Judels, Brandon Tynan, Tommy Reilly, The Elderbloom Chorus, White and Stanley, and the Lady Killers' Quartet. Screen play by Michael Fessier and Lawrence Kimble, from a novel by Louis Bromfield. Dance numbers directed by Dave Gould. Musical director Louis Forbstein. Director Lewis Seiler. Warner Bros.-First National.

The plot of this ludicrous farce is built upon the premise that if you really believe in fairy tales they may come true. Two elderly family servants have inherited a Mid-Victorian mansion and with it, its eccentric boarders, heavy taxes, and its mortgage. Their respective children seem more of a liability than otherwise. Into this strangely assorted household comes a gangster to find a hideout, and the denouement is a vindication of the efficacy of wishful thinking.

The characters introduced are individualized and are very amusing. Una O'Connor is seen as *Maggie,* former cook, who with vitriolic sharpness defends her rights to *"Miss Minerva's"* gift. Jessie Busby, as *Mrs. Taylor,* former maid, lives serenely secure in a world where her "stories" all end happily; Grant Mitchell as *Rene Salmon,* a remittance man, writes atrocious poetry; Brandon Tynan as *Mr. Van Diver,* is a gentle soul living in the past. Felix Bressart as the *Great Boldoni,* is a relic of vaudeville days; Zasu Pitts as *Miss Flint,* is an old maid with a complex about men. All of them are as out of date as are the magnificent furnishings of the ancient house. Ann Sheridan is *Maggie's* worldly wise and hard-boiled daughter, chorus girl out of a job. Jeffrey Lynn is *Mrs. Taylor's* son, *Tommy,* a struggling composer entangled with the underworld. Humphrey Bogart is *Grasselli,* a gambler, tough and brutal, who finds the friendly solicitude of his fellow boarders strangely embarrassing and beyond his power to handle by his usual methods. All these characterizations are clever.

It is ridiculous fun with appropriate and sometimes racy dialogue, hilarious situations, and a musical climax which is skilfully introduced. Suspense is well handled. How literally it follows Louis Bromfield's original plot we are unable to say, but the adaptation has achieved a satirical, farcical effect, and it moves rapidly after a rather slow beginning. It is light, amusing entertainment best suited for adult enjoyment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended: no value **Children 8 to 12** No

❖

LAUGH IT OFF ◇ ◇

Constance Moore, Johnny Downs, Marjorie Rambeau, Edgar Kennedy, Hedda Hopper, Janet Beecher, Cecil Cunningham. Story by Lee Loeb. Screen play by Harry Clork. Direction by Albert S. Rogell. Universal.

Age declares a dividend in this film, when four old ladies in a home for aged vaudeville actresses find the funds of the institution have been mismanaged and decide they are still capable of making a living. They enlist the services of a young lawyer, nephew of one of the quartet, and manage to go back on the stage where they prove that they are still able to please their public. The four women have distinct individualities, and there is plenty of good comedy. The picture

is enhanced by the music of Johnny Downs and Constance Moore and the dancing of Paula Stone.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 Probably would not appreciate the elderly women

❖

LITTLE ORVIE ◇ ◇

John Sheffield, Ernest Truex, Dorothy Tree, Ann Todd, Emma Dunn, Daisy Mothershed, Fay Helm, Virginia Brissac, Paul Burns, Del Henderson, Fern Emmett, Edgar Dearing, Ray Turner. From the novel by Booth Tarkington. Musical score by Paul Sawtell. Direction by Roy McCarey. RKO-Radio Pictures, Inc.

The story of how *Little Orvie* persuaded his parents to allow him to adopt a dog makes the kind of screen entertainment that can be thoroughly enjoyed by people of various ages. It reflects Booth Tarkington's sympathetic understanding of boy psychology and amusingly pictures the individual foibles and virtues of a pleasant family group. John Sheffield as *Orvie* is a natural appealing little boy.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining

Children, 8 to 12 Yes

❖

MUSIC IN MY HEART ◇ ◇

Tony Martin, Rita Hayworth, Edith Fellows, Alan Mowbray, Eric Blore, George Tobias, Joseph Crehan, George Humbert. Original story and screen play by James Edward Grant. Direction by Joseph Santley. Columbia.

Two young people miss a boat: a singer on his way to deportation and a young girl on her way to marry a millionaire. After this interesting introduction the plot becomes attenuated and concerns itself with an assorted group of people who live in *Mary's* home. There are some amusing impersonations. The story serves chiefly as a connecting thread for the songs of Tony Martin and the music of Andre Kostelanetz, which is excellent. Those who are fond of music and uncritical of other elements in a picture will find many moments of pleasure.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 Too slow

❖

MY SON, MY SON ◇ ◇

Madeleine Carroll, Brian Aherne, Louis Hayward, Laraine Day, Henry Hull, Josephine Hutchinson, Sophie Stewart, Bruce Lester, Scotty Beckett, Brenda Henderson, Teddy Moorwood. From the novel by Howard Spring. Musical direction by Edward Ward. Direction by Charles Vidor. Edward Small Production.

Howard Spring's long and emotional novel is skilfully condensed into a screen drama which in spite of its sombre theme bids fair to be even more popularly appealing than the original. There is still a spendthrift amount of material in the elaborate plot, and the production verges on melodrama, but the acting is so convincing and the direction so sensitive that one forgives a certain amount of sentimentality in the leading roles and follows with unswerving interest the development of the tragic theme. The story is based on the premise that a parent's unwise and too indulgent love destroys the moral fibre of his child and leads inevitably to tragedy. Here we see the thesis worked out in the case of a father who has suffered poverty in his youth and who is determined to lavish upon his son all the material indulgences that he himself has been denied. The son grows up to be a profligate, a liar, and a weakling, and ruins not only his own life but the lives of many with whom he comes in contact.

Excellent character delineation makes the story convincing. All the characters who make up the intricate human background are vividly real, and the important roles are exceptionally well interpreted. The changes which have been made in adapting the novel to the screen are in most instances probably an improvement. The father, played by Brian Aherne, is a more likable and sympathethic person, and a number of incidents of the book are presented in a manner that makes them more acceptable to general concepts of morality. Only in the finale does the film depart from plausibility. The fate of young *Oliver* in the book, though possibly too shocking for film audiences, is certainly more logical than the screen ending.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Requires adult experience to evaluate

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

PRIMROSE PATH ◇ ◇

Ginger Rogers, Joel McCrea, Marjory Rambeau, Henry Travers, Queenie Vassar, Joan Carroll, Vivienne Osborne, Carmen Morales. Screen play by Allan Scott and Gregory La Cava, adapted from play by Robert L. Buckner and Walter Hart. Direction by Gregory La Cava. RKO.

The credit sheet does not mention the fact that "February Hill" by Victoria Lincoln is the novel from which this film has been made. Readers of the book will recognize the outline of the plot as well as the people whose earthy characters form the skeleton which the new modifications follow. It is the story of a girl from "Primrose Hill," a miserable, pathetic part of town shunned by respectable people. Her mother is a prostitute as was also her coarse and cynical grandmother, and her college bred father is a drunkard, sunk so low in degradation that he accepts the miserable living made possible by her mother's profession. The girl leaves home when she falls in love, and by deceiving the boy about her family, succeeds in getting him to marry her. But her past catches up with her and tragedy

almost sets her unwillingly upon the "Primrose path." It is a sordid pitiful, realistic picture of women unwilling to face a difficult economic situation and deliberately choosing an unsocial means of livelihood. However, it is very well acted, and its honesty is commendable for it does not cast a rosy glamour on the lives of these unfortunate people. *Mamie Adams,* the mother, is excellently played by Marjorie Rambeau. Queenie Vassar's role is thoroughly repellent, but she plays it in an arresting manner. A little child, caught in the mire of circumstance, is an unhappy feature of the story.

The plot is mainly the love story of two young persons who cannot escape from their sordid background. Ginger Rogers, as the girl, sacrifices glamour for a simple dramatic role which she plays exceptionally well. Joel McCrea is well cast. Henry Travers brings the one pleasant note into a singularly depressing story. The producers evidently wished the film to be judged without regard to the novel, but those familiar with the book will miss the deeper insight into character which it brought out, as well as the curiously affectionate family relations which held mother, daughter and grandmother together in a fierce loyalty. Some of the characters of the novel have been omitted and the plot is changed in many details, but the film achieves maturity in its portrayal of the subject matter.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No: no value **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

RECECCA ◇ ◇

Laurence Olivier, Joan Fontaine, George Sanders, Judith Anderson, Nigel Bruce, Reginald Denny, C. Aubrey Smith, Gladys Cooper, Florence Bates, Leonard Cary, Leo G. Carroll. From the novel by Daphne du Maurier. Screen play by Robert E. Sherwood and Joan Harrison. Adaptation by Phil MacDonald and Michael Hogan. Musical score by Franz Waxman and Leo Forbes. Direction by Alfred Hitchcock. David Selznick Production. United Artists.

"Rebecca" is an arresting and extraordinary film again displaying the fine discernment so often found in Selznick Productions. The story is unusual. Taken from the novel by Daphne du Maurier, it is a psychological study which has been adapted to the screen with utmost fidelity to the author's concept. The casting is flawless, and the direction catches perfectly the mood of mystery and menace which motivates the plot.

The opening scenes are of *Mandalay,* a beautiful English castle, while a woman's haunting voice describes its exquisite beauty as it stood mellowed by the years, proud and lovely, with its terraced lawns and gardens sloping to the sea. Then the action cuts back to the time when the narrator, a charming, unsophisticated girl, meets *Maxim de Winter,* the owner of the estate. Their unusual romance is pictured, their return to *Mandalay,* and the dread problem which arises because of the sinister influence of the spirit of *Rebecca,* a woman who was dead before the story opens. Through the eyes of the second wife the character of this woman is gradually revealed as the gig-saw bits of the plot fit into place and climax in startling melodrama.

Joan Fontaine is perfectly cast. With none of the artificial glamour usually allotted to film heroines, she is exquisitely natural and unsophisticated. She gives exactly the impression suggested by the novel. In dress, makeup, and behavior she is the simple, charming girl, overawed by the formality and magnificence of the household she has entered, and beaten down by the menace she cannot analyze. Lawrence Olivier, also, is exceptionally fine in the role of *de Winter,* a man defeated by the tragedy he cannot escape.

The character roles are particularly well played with Judith Anderson enacting the magnificently malevolent housekeeper and Florence Bates giving a clever and original performance as the vulgar *Mrs. Van Hopper.* Others are also noteworthy. The photography is very fine and the atmospheric score a beautiful expression of the varying moods.

Those who have read and liked the book will find this an ideal projection of the story and will be relieved by the slight change in the ending which lightens the tragedy. The production is an exceptionally interesting example of coordinated talents.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Mature **Children, 8 to 12** Too mature

❖

SHOOTING HIGH ◇ ◇

Jane Withers, Gene Autry, Marjorie Weaver, Robert Lowery, Katherine Aldridge, Hobart Cavanaugh, Jack Carson, Hamilton McFadden, Charles Middleton. Original screen play by Lou Breslow and Owen Francis. Musical direction by Samuel Kaylin. Direction by Alfred E. Green. 20th Century-Fox.

Jane Withers is cast in another of her pert roles in this slap dash western melodrama. As *Jane Pritchard,* daughter of the mayor of a small western town, she plays matchmaker for the benefit of her older sister, patches up a feud of long standing between two of the leading families of the community, helps persuade the townspeople to welcome a motion picture company into their midst, and later assists the sheriff to run the leading man out of town. Added to these exploits are trick riding and the singing of cowboy songs by Gene Autry, and a bank robbery.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable **Children, 8 to 12** Not recommended

STAR DUST ◇ ◇

Linda Darnell, John Payne, Roland Young, Charlotte Greenwood, William Gargan, May Beth Hughes, Mary Healy, Donald Meek. Screen play by Robert Ellis and Helen Logan. Based on a story by Jesse Malo, Kenneth Earl and Ivan Kahn. Direction by Walter Lang. Music and lyrics by Mack Gordon. 20th Century-Fox.

The inside facts about the making of stars by Hollywood are always interesting, and "Star Dust" is no exception to the rule. It is a bright and unpretentious story about a talent scout who searches the highways and byways for new faces, only to contend against indifference, stupidity, jealousy and politics in a studio. The boys and girls arrive with high hopes, submit to casual training and hours of makeup and tests, and are sent home again as new ones come to take their places. It all seems possible, and it is human and entertaining. Linda Darnell is a very pretty girl whose acting is nicely acceptable. John Payne also is convincing in his boyish role. Roland Young is good, as always, but Charlotte Greenwood is superlative. Scenes of Hollywood will please those who do not live within its limits, a good musical score and catchy tunes enliven the film, and the whole effect is very gay and entertaining.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good

Children, 8 to 12 If it interests

❖

TOO MANY HUSBANDS ◇ ◇

Jean Arthur, Fred MacMurray, Melvyn Douglas, Harry Davenport, Dorothy Peterson, Melville Cooper. Columbia.

When a young explorer, legally declared dead, returns from a desert island and finds his wife happily married to his best friend, unlike Enoch Arden, he moves in with the couple and confronts the lady with the necessity of choosing between her two husbands. This is the situation around which "Too Many Husbands" is written. It is supposed to be humorous and sometimes is, owing to the clever lines and the fact that Jean Arthur does an excellent piece of acting as the absurdly irresponsible young woman who not only can't make up her mind which husband she prefers but won't even try to. The settings are on a luxurious scale, complete with butler, and Jean Arthur looking exceptionally pretty and modish seems hugely to enjoy her role, but the picture is not altogether successful in sustaining its mood. It drags a bit here and there, and sometimes the audience is allowed to feel that the situation is intrinsically more pathetic than amusing.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Sophisticated, but well enough handled

Children, 8 to 12 No interest

VIRGINIA CITY ◇ ◇

Errol Flynn, Miriam Hopkins, Randolf Scott, Humphry Bogart, Frank McHugh, Alan Hale, Guinn "Big Boy" Williams, John Litel. Original screen play by Robert Buckner. Direction by Michael Curtiz. Music by Max Steiner. Warner Bros.-First National.

Here is pictured an incident which is said to have had a basis of fact in events that took place during the last year of the Civil War in 1864. Southern sympathizers in the mining camp at Virginia City, Nevada, attempted to send out five thousand dollars in gold to replenish the fast dwindling resources of the Confederate Army. The failure of the attempt coincided with the ending of the war. Errol Flynn, in the role of Union secret service man, and Randolf Scott as a Confederate officer try to outwit each other, and the action provides fast moving, exciting melodrama. The rowdy camp life and its followers are pictured with the glamour which the passing years seem to demand, and the attractive cast invests the film with a bright lustre. Though it is a typical action film, not entirely credible in every incident and having a love story which lacks vitality, it is nevertheless entertaining except for the many brutally realistic shots of horses falling. The outdoor photography is very beautiful, and a fine musical score adds to the emotional effect.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Exciting, and probably entertaining

Children, 8 to 12 Too stimulating for many

❖

VIVA CISCO KID ◇ ◇

Cesar Romero, Jean Rogers, Chris-Pin Martin, Minor Watson, Stanley Fields, Nigel de Brulier, Harold Goodwin, Francis Ford, Charles Judles. Suggested by character created by O. Henry. Musical direction by Samuel Kaylin. Direction by Norman Foster. 20th Century-Fox.

The *Cisco Kid*, exponent of chivalrous banditry, still roams the plains followed by his faithful *amigo*. In this episode he as usual rescues a lady in distress, falls in love with her—but only temporarily, and goes on his way with the law still on his trail. The lady's father is a member of a gang of robbers, and before the *Cisco Kid* departs he sees that the gang is dispersed, the bad father reformed, and the safe future of the girl assured. The picture has its quota of thrills and beautiful scenery and it moves along at a good pace. It will probably be enjoyed by anyone who likes routine western melodrama.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 Doubtful

SHORT SUBJECTS

BUSY LITTLE BEARS ◇ ◇

This was justly given the Academy award for the best one reel short of the year. It is a delightfully original account of the antics of three little bears, a different sort of nature study with beautiful natural surroundings. The bears have an innate appeal and hold the interest of the audience as effectively as trained entertainers. They fish and search for honey, romp and get into real mischief when their love of adventure leads them into a human habitation.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining — **Children, 8 to 12** Delightful

❖

MARCH OF TIME NO. 8 VOL. VI CANADA AT WAR ◇ ◇

An exceedingly interesting if at times grim presentation of Canada's preparation for a part in the present world war is depicted in this number of the March of Time. Canada's man power is shown in training for service in the fields of machine gunning, gas warfare, submarine and radio branches with none of the pomp and none of the gay deviltry of the preparations for the last war. Everything is being done to protect the home shores from invasion. The inclusion of President Roosevelt's speech advocating our defense of Canada if attacked seems somewhat unnecessary. Like other March of Times this has a wealth of information and is reviewed in a powerful manner.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes — **Children, 8 to 12** Better not

OLD HICKORY ◇ ◇

The events of the life of Andrew Jackson from the war of 1812 through the rest of his career are recounted in this fine Technicolor film which adds to the knowledge and understanding of American history. It touches on his wife, his temporary social ostracism and carries throughout the picture his belief in a united America, for which he was willing to make all sacrifices.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Very good — **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

❖

TEDDY, THE ROUGHRIDER ◇ ◇

This is a vivid account of the life of the first famous Roosevelt, his political beliefs, his active career, his leadership of the army and his own Rough Riders. He explains his views of trade and preparedness and gives his reasons for seizing the Canal Zone. It ends with an affecting sequence on the death of his son, Quentin, in the World War. The film is done in Technicolor, and Sidney Blackmer gives a capable performance as Theodore Roosevelt.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes — **Children, 8 to 12** Very good

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FEATURE FILMS

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Buck Benny Rides Again
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Double Alibi
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If I Had My Way
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Patent Dog Washer
Puss Gets the Boot
The Riveter
Tug Boat Mickey

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FEATURE FILMS

THE BISCUIT EATER ◇ ◇

Billy Lee, Cordell Hickman, Promise (the dog), Helene Millard, Richard Lane, Lester Matthews, Snowflake. Based on a story by James Street. Screen play by Stuart Anthony and Lillie Hayward. Direction by Stuart Heisler. Paramount.

Because of its simplicity of treatment and real understanding of both dogs and small boys, this is one of the most charming pictures of its kind ever made. Billy Lee and the colored boy, Cordell Hickman, are absolutely natural, and so too is the dog, *Promise*, who, during the first part of his life, is an object of scorn because he is a "biscuit eater" or no-good egg-sucker. A runt to begin with, he is trained by the boys until he is prize-winning material for the Georgia Hunt. The film has especial interest because it is taken at the pointer kennels in Albany, Georgia, with fine authentic backgrounds of the South. Perhaps the ending should be softened, perhaps several details could be less frightening for children, but on the whole it is a delightful and unusual picture.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent **Children, 8 to 12** Not for the sensitive

BUCK BENNY RIDES AGAIN ◇ ◇

Jack Benny, Ellen Drew, Eddie Anderson, Andy Devine, Phil Harris, Dennis Day, Virginia Dale, Lillian Cornell, Theresa Harris. Dance routines by Merriel Abbott dancers. Screen play by William Morrow and Edmund Beloin, from a story by Arthur Stringer. Produced and directed by Mark Sandrich. Paramount.

Radio fans of Jack Benny will be delighted by this "Saga of the West" in which Jack fabricates a story about a western ranch and his prowess as a big 'he man' to a girl to whom he is attracted and then finds that he must live up to his claims. The settings are elaborate and beautiful, the comedy is fast and furious, and several remarkably good specialty numbers are interpolated into the action. The Indian adagio dance is especially spectacular. *Rochester* is important in the fun and Eddie Anderson, in this role, proves himself to be skillful in dancing as well as in comedy. *Carmichael* makes several hilarious appearances as well. The cast is excellent, the story is amusing, and the whole provides an entertaining hour of fun.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good **Children, 8 to 12** Good

DARK COMMAND ◇ ◇

Claire Trevor, John Wayne, Walted Pidgeon, Roy Rogers, George Hayes, Porter Hall, Marjorie Main, Raymond Walburn. Based on the novel by W. R. Burnet. Directed by Raoul Walsh. Republic.

When the Civil War broke out, Kansas, because of its location, was one of the states in which feeling was nearly equally divided between the North and the South, and since the blame for violent raids could easily be attributed to either of the two factions, guerilla warfare flourished. "Dark Command" tells the story of this period and of an adventurer who led a guerilla band. It does not, however, succeed in creating an atmosphere that might be considered peculiar to that particular time and place. The scenario follows the mode of a stereotyped western melodrama, and the characters, because of their uninspired parts, are only a little better than the conventional puppets of routine westerns.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable — **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

THE DOCTOR TAKES A WIFE ◇ ◇

Loretta Young, Ray Milland, Reginald Gardner, Gail Patrick, Edmund Gwenn. Story by Aleen Leslie. Screen play by George Seaton and Ken Englund. Direction by Alexander Hall. Columbia Pictures.

Here we have a return to bedroom farce, noisy, boisterous and, in the end, incongruously romantic and sentimental. A woman writer and a brain specialist unwillingly pretend, for financial reasons, that they are married. They live together in bickering uncongeniality in a small apartment and find that the publicity attending the arrangements brings insoluable difficulties because of the interest of their friends, relatives, newspaper reporters and the doctor's fiancee. The action is broad, the dialogue is racy, and the characters unfortunately lose audience sympathy because of their behavior so that no one cares much what happens to them. The cast handle the plot very well under the circumstances, and Ray Milland shows a new deftness in his acting. Edmund Gwenn is particularly good as the doctor's doting parent. The production may have general appeal but it is a return to a type of entertainment which we had hoped was obsolete.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No. — **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

DOUBLE ALIBI ◇ ◇

Wayne Morris, Margaret Lindsay, William Gargan, Roscoe Karns, Robert E. Keane, James Burke. Screen play by Harold Buchman, Roy Chanslor, Charles Grayson, based on a story by Frederick C. Davis. Musical direction by H. J. Salter. Direction by Philip Rosen. Universal.

A murder, a romance, three suspects, a newspaper woman, a humorous photographer, the press and the police are the familiar ingredients of this film. It is passably entertaining because of its lively tempo and well-maintained suspense.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Fair — **Children, 8 to 12** Better not

❖

FLIGHT ANGELS ◇ ◇

Virginia Bruce, Dennis Morgan, Wayne Morris, Ralph Bellamy, Jane Wyman, Margot, Stevenson, Dorothea Kent, John Litel. Original story by Jerry Wald and Richard Macauly. Screen play by Maurice Leo. Direction by Lewis Seiler. Warner Brothers, First National.

This is a romantic tale about an airplane stewardess in love with a pilot who has a girl at every stop. The pilot is grounded because of failing eyesight, and his emotional break-up furthers the plot. The humor is farcical and may not greatly appeal to the young women who make up the personnel of the airline hostesses, but they must credit the public with ability to discount the "movie touch." It is a light, fairly entertaining program film with a routine plot.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable — **Children, 8 to 12** No great interest

❖

FORTY LITTLE MOTHERS ◇ ◇

Eddie Cantor, Judith Anderson, Rita Johnson, Diane Lewis, Bonita Granville, Ralph Morgan, Nydia Westman, Baby Quintanilla. Screen play by Dorothy Yost and Ernest Pagano, based on story by Jean Guitton. Direction by Busby Berkeley. Produced by Harry Rapf. M-G-M.

It has become the custom for babies to steal pictures these days, so that we are not surprised to find wee Baby Quintanilla doing it again. However this fact does not disparage the rest of the cast of this amusing, albeit sentimental, farce. Eddie Cantor as a former Phi Beta Kappa man of the 1916 Class of *Samford,* after twenty odd years is jobless. In a plausible enough way he suddenly finds himself responsible for a baby's care and equally unexpectedly appointed to a teaching job in a girl's private school. Of course the baby's presence must be kept secret but he is discovered and the entire student body become self-appointed "little mothers." When the martinet who heads the school finds out, the fat is in the fire.

Eddie Cantor plays a straight role simply and convincingly. Miss Anderson, lately seen in "Rebecca," is a good head-mistress of the school and Nydia Westman is droll in an eccentric role as her slightly addled assistant. The school girls are pretty and youthful. Excusable license is taken in picturing school life, for it is all light, diverting entertainment which should appeal to family audiences.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good — **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

IF I HAD MY WAY ◇ ◇

Bing Crosby, Gloria Jean, Charles Winninger, El Brendel, Allyn Joslyn, Claire Dodd, Nana Bryant; also Blanche Ring, Eddie Leonard, Trixie Friganza, Julian Eltinge, Grace LaRue, Paul Gordon. Screen play by William Counselman and James V. Kern. Produced and directed by David Butler. Universal.

The combined efforts of Bing Crosby, Gloria Jean and El Brendel make this tuneful trifle pleasing entertainment. The story is inconsequential. The two men are bridge workers whose pal is killed as the Golden Gate bridge nears completion. They assume responsibility for his young daughter and, through El Brendel's clumsy bungling, find themselves owners of a debt-ridden night club. Their way of financing it is fantastic but effective. Interest is added by the appearance of several old time stage and vaudeville favorites in the night club scenes. It is gay, melodious and light and has appeal because it does not take itself seriously.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

❖

IRENE ◇ ◇

Anne Neagle, Ray Milland, Roland Young, Alan Marshall, May Robson, Billie Burke, Arthur Treacher, Marsha Hunt. Screen play by Alice Duer Miller from the musical comedy "Irene." Produced and directed by Herbert Wilcox. R. K. O.

"Irene" is a light Cinderella story about a little shop girl who becomes a fashion model and then masquerades as a prominent visitor from Ireland. In the end she wins her man and her place in the sun. The familiar music has been woven into the charming score, and the theme song, delightfully presented, is followed by a swing burlesque which is highly entertaining. The picture opens slowly and some of the dialogue and comedy is forced. However, Miss Neagle is very effective in the title role; she has beauty and charm and she is graceful and lovely in her dance scenes. Billie Burke is amusing in one of her fluttery, confused roles. Roland Young and May Robson are excellent. It is light, airy, pleasant entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining for girls especially **Children, 8 to 12** If interested

❖

I WAS AN ADVENTURESS ◇ ◇

Zorina, Richard Greene, Erich Von Stroheim, Peter Lorre, Sig Rumann, Fritz Feld. Screen play by Karl Tunberg, Don Ettlinger, and John O'Hara, based on an original production by Gregor Rabinovitsch. Musical direction by David Buttolph. Direction by Gregory Ratloff. 20th Century-Fox.

This is an extremely frothy comedy which compensates in part for its deficiencies in plot by offering one beautiful ballet in a lovely setting with Zorina as the premiere danseuse. The story involves a trio of swindlers, one of them being an attractive woman who is supposed to charm rich young men and then persuade them to buy jewels which have been stolen by her confederates. Eventually, of course, she falls in love with one of her intended victims and everyone starts double-crossing everyone else. The plot is a bit too implausible even for such lightweight entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too much crime and sophistication **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

JOHNNY APOLLO ◇ ◇

Tyrone Power, Dorothy Lamour, Edward Arnold, Lloyd Nolan, Charley Grapewin, Lionel Atwill. Screen play by Samuel G. Engel and Hal Long. Direction by Henry Hathaway. 20th Century-Fox.

"Johnny Apollo" is an absorbing picture but due to its maudlin sympathy for undeserving men, it is by no means a good one. When a noted stockbroker embezzles the money of people who trust him, his son, spurned by college friends, turns to gangster activities as his only means of livelihood, participating in large scale robberies and indirectly in murder. Eventually he lands in the same prison with his father and in time both go free to enjoy life, implying that while crime doesn't pay all the time, in some instances the profits are high. Efficient acting on the part of Edward Arnold as the father and a vivid characterization of the son, alias *Johnny Apollo*, by Tyrone Power, are not sufficient to make a triumph of unconvincing roles. Due to high suspense, realistic details, strong atmosphere and a masterly hand in the direction, the picture has strength and for that reason will be doubly harmful in its influence on youth.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Pernicious **Children, 8 to 12** Impossible

❖

THE LIGHT OF THE WESTERN STARS ◇

Victor Jory, Jo Ann Sayers, Russell Hayden, Morri Ankrum, Noah Beery, Jr., Ruth Rogers. Based on the story by Zane Grey. Screen play by Norman Houston. Direction by Lesley Selander, Paramount.

In a frontier saloon *Gene Stewart* drinking uproariously, wagers that he will marry the first woman who comes to town. She happens to be a cool and critical Easterner who spends the succeeding months learning to like mountains and sagebrush and the wild and woolly inhabitants, while *Gene* fights his way to sobriety and victory over his many enemies. Wallace Beery, Jr., takes the part of *Poco*, a young Mexican whose devotion to his master is so sincerely portrayed that his is the best performance in the film. The first scenes are unnecessarily slow, but the tempo increases as the play goes on. Much of the action is typical of Western pictures, and there is the usual splendid outdoor photography; those

who like this class of films will find this one interesting but not outstanding.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable
Children, 8 to 12 Too much drinking and shooting

❖

MY FAVORITE WIFE ◇ ◇

Irene Dunne, Cary Grant, Randolph Scott, Gail Patrick, Ann Shoemaker, Scotty Beckett, Mary Lou Harrington, Donald MacBride, Granville Bates, Pedro de Cordoba, Hugh O'Connell. Story by Bella and Samuel Spewack. Direction by Garson Kanin. A Leo McCarey production. R. K. O.

Based on the Enoch Arden theme, which seems to have a popular revival at present, this farce-comedy is hilariously entertaining. As in most drama of this type, the plot is strained at times, but this is balanced by brilliant lines and mirth provoking situations which the director has pointed up to the limit, and by a clever musical score which emphasizes the humor. Among the high lights are the courtroom scenes with a superlative performance by Granville Bates as the Judge.

The play opens with *Nick* (Cary Grant) petitioning the Court to establish the legal death of his wife who was shipwrecked seven years before. He then remarries. Preposterously, on the same day, the wife returns from a desert isle. *Nick* immediately becomes embroiled in a subtle battle of wits while the two women battle for sole possession of their mutual spouse, and his peace of mind is not helped when he discovers that his wife was not alone during her enforced exile. The children, too, are intrigued by the strange behavior of their father and by the presence of the lovely lady whom they cannot identify. A pertinent comment may be made that the cast behave like gracious, well-bred people throughout their fantastic experiences.

The story is very skilfully told, and the performances are decidedly clever. Mr. Kanin has deftly brought out all the comedy and gives us a kindly, merry entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Sophisticated
Children, 8 to 12 Mature

❖

ONE MILLION B. C. ◇ ◇

Victor Mature, Carole Landis, Lon Chaney, Jr., Mamo Clark, Nigel de Brulier. Original screen play by Mickell Novak, George Baker and Joseph Frickert. Direction by Hall Roach and Hal Roach, Jr. Hal Roach-United Artists.

Imagination runs riot in a film world of prehistoric monsters with blood-curdling sound effects and noteworthy trick photography. Since the age of reptiles preceded by many eons the age of man with articulate speech, this picture which makes the two periods coincident is not exactly authentic, but it has some remarkable effects. An introduction shows mountain climbers seeking refuge from a storm in a cave, where an old scholar reconstructs from ancient paintings on the wall the history of the tough, brute-like Rock People who learned the gentle, kindly ways of the Shell People through the romance of a young woman from one tribe with a young man from the other.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable
Children, 8 to 12 Too noisy and brutal

❖

ON THEIR OWN ◇ ◇

Spring Byington, Ken Howell, George Ernest, June Carlson, Florence Roberts, Billy Mahan, John Qualen. Story by Val Buryon, Jack Jungmeyer, Jr. and Edith Skouras. Direction by Otto Brower. 20th Century-Fox.

The family drug store which has supported the *Jones* household for many years and was flourishing in the last picture, finally goes on the rocks along with *Pa's* health, and the tribe move out to a bungalow court in California. This venture is successful due to the shrewdness of *Mother Jones* in advertising for children and pets. The picture is perfectly wholesome and quite humdrum with a good deal of slap-stick, but those who follow the fortunes of the *Jones* clan will admire their courage and versatility in this latest crisis.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes
Children, 8 to 12 Yes

❖

THE SAINT TAKES OVER ◇ ◇

George Sanders, Wendy Barrie, Jonathan Hale, Paul Guilfoyle, Morgan Conway. Screen play by Lynn Root and Frank Fenton. Direction by Jack Hively. R.K.O.-Radio.

The Saint, that Quixotic detective who makes use of his former criminal career, appears on the scene to help out of a bad predicament his friend and erstwhile enemy, *Inspector Fernack. Fernack* has been implicated by a gang of race-track operators who have been "fixing" the races. Strangely enough these men are murdered one after another soon after *The Saint* arrives, although he is not responsible for their fate. This is better than most of the series, with some good dialogue, fair acting, and enough humor to offset the grim account of fraudulent dealing and death.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Questionable
Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

SATURDAY'S CHILDREN ◇ ◇

John Garfield, Anne Shirley, Claude Rains, Roscoe Carns, Lee Patrick, Dennis Moore, George Tobias, Elizabeth Risdon, Berton Churchill. Screen play by Julius J. and Philip G. Epstein, based on a play by Maxwell Anderson. Directed by Vincent Sherman. Warner Brothers.

"Saturday's Children" apparently have a long and dreary way to go in life if Maxwell Anderson's prize play is right. It is not a happy picture, although the ending gives one faith that love will find a way for two young people struggling against economic hard-

ships. Anne Shirley plays the girl who falls in love and, at the suggestion of a worldly sister, tricks the young man into marriage. Their combined pay checks barely cover the necessities of life. When she is cut from the payroll and his wages are lowered, he bitterly resents having allowed marriage to interfere with a promising job in the Philippines which he had planned to accept. Her understanding father's attempted sacrifice brings the young couple to an acceptance of life's deep responsibilties, if not to its brighter opportunities. Whatever philosophy the stage play outlined seems lost in the picture. The characterizations are not profound and no promise is assured of a lasting solution of their problem, for the economic situation remains unsolved. It simply leaves two young people who are about to have a baby accepting the need for each other with the fond hope that something may turn up eventually to assure them of a livelihood. Anne Shirley and Claude Rains are well cast, but John Garfield is not at his best in this role. The family life presented is unpleasant and little seems to be gained by living, however objectively, through the experiences unfolded.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

'TIL WE MEET AGAIN ◇ ◇

Merle Oberon, George Brent, Pat O'Brien, Geraldine Fitzgerald, Binnie Barnes, Frank McHugh, Eric Blore, Henry O'Neill, George Reeves. Story by Robert Lord. Screen play by Warren Duff. Direction by Edmund Goulding. Warner Bros.

In 1932 Warner Brothers made the first version of this story with Kay Francis and William Powell under the name of "One Way Passage." Now as then it is an unusual picture. Two people meet by chance in a bar in Hong Kong, both under sentence of death, the man convicted on a murder charge, the girl stricken by an incurable disease of the heart. Concealing the facts from each other, they cross the ocean on a great liner, spending halcyon days together, while their love takes on a rare quality of imperishability, defiant of death itself. Because of the leniency of his jailer and the presence of two confederates on the ship, *Dan Hardesty* cherishes the hope of escape to make a new life for himself and *Joan,* until he learns that her days are drawing to an end.

Although one melodramatic scene suggests that violent impulses have not been completely eradicated from *Dan's* soul, the part as played by George Brent is very satisfying. Merle Oberon has a fragile loveliness which give a poignant appeal to the part of *Joan.* Pat O'Brien as the peace officer, Geraldine Fitzgerald as *Joan's* friend, Binnie Barnes and Frank McHugh of the fraternity of crooks, as well as Eric Blore, who has been elevated from his usual butler role to "owner of half New Zealand," all add color and interest to the film. Photography has smoothness and richness of tone, settings are luxurious and the direction is of the highest order.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too sophisticated **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

TORRID ZONE ◇ ◇

James Cagney, Ann Sheridan, Pat O'Brien, Andy Devine, Helen Vinson. Original screen play by Richard Macaulay and Jerry Wald. Directed by Wiliam Keighley. Warner Bros.

Whoever has been thinking that productions like "Torrid Zone" were safely dead and buried will be shocked to find that at least one has been disintered. The "S. A." of ten years ago seems to have changed its name to "fourteen carat oomph," but it still can't make a dull picture exciting. Ann Sheridan is cast as a de luxe tramp who lands at a banana plantation with the intention of singing in one of the bars, but the bad tempered manager of the plantation (Pat O'Brien) suspects, as does the audience, that she will not limit her activities to singing and he orders her deported. Incidents showing how and why he fails to get rid of her make up the entire picture and are never very interesting, although James Cagney and Ann Sheridan deliver some amusing wisecracks.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Bad **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

TURNABOUT ◇ ◇

Adolphe Menjou, Carole Landis, John Hubbard, William Gargan, Verree Teasdale, Mary Astor, Donald Meek. Screen play by Mickell Novak, Berne Giler and John McClain, based on the novel "Turnabout" by Thorne Smith. Direction by Hal Roach. Hal Roach-United Artists.

The absurd idea which is the basis of this rather risque farce hardly furnishes enough material for a feature-length picture. However, considering the fact that Thorne Smith's book had its repetitious moments, the film is an improvement on the original. A young couple who wished that they might change places have their wish granted, in that each takes the other's form while their voices and personalities remain the same. The results are ludicrous and sometimes shocking both to the other characters of the picture and to the audience. Because of its originality and its highly spiced innuendoes, the film will no doubt draw curious audiences who may or may not be disappointed. It belongs to the class of films which violate taste rather than ethics.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended **Children, 8 to 12** No

20 MULE TEAM ◇ ◇

Walace Beery, Leo Carrillo, Marjorie Rambeau, Anne Baxter, Douglas Fowley, Noah Beery, Jr. Screen play by Cyril Hume, E. E. Paramore and Richard Maibaum, based on a story by Robert C. DuSoe and Owen Atkinson. Direction by Richard Thorpe. M-G-M.

The best part of this picture is the photography of Death Valley with beautiful views of the mountain rims, the salt flats, the alluvial fans, and the shifting sand dunes. The theme of the search for a commercially profitable grade of borax ore and the use of the famous 20-mule teams in bringing it to the railroad hold the promise of an unusually interesting film, which unfortunately is not realized. The plot is pure hokum and old time melodrama of the daughter-saved-from-the-city-slicker type. It is naive enough not to be objectionable, but there is too much killing and even too much Wallace Beery, whose acting is commendable in smaller doses. Leo Carrillo, Marjorie Rambeau and Anne Baxter succeed fairly well in making flesh-and-blood people out of stereotyped characters.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Fair — **Children, 8 to 12** Too brutal

❖

TWO GIRLS ON BROADWAY ◇ ◇

Lana Turner, Joan Blondell, George Murphy, Kent Taylor. Based on a story by Edmund Goulding. Screen play by Joseph Fields and Jerome Chodorov. Direction by Jack Cummings. M-G-M.

This is an old theme brought up to date, with snappy music and costumes and a good deal of comedy. The older sister, *Molly,* is almost too unselfish to be true, as she comes to New York to protect her younger sister and ends by donating to *Pat* her lover as well as her bid for fame and fortune on the stage. However, the story serves mainly as a framework for the accomplishments of the various members of the cast in singing and dancing and repartee. Lana Turner, Joan Blondell and George Murphy all have attractive personalities and raise the entertainment content of a pleasant but not too important production.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Fair — **Children, 8 to 12** Too mature

❖

TYPHOON ◇ ◇

Dorothy Lamour, Robert Preston, Lynne Overman, J. Carrol Naish, Chief Thundercloud, Frank Reicher, John Rogers, Paul Harvey, Norma Nelson, Jack Carson, Screen play by Allen Rivkon, based on a story by Steve Fisher. Musical score by Frederick Hollander. Direction by Louis King. Paramount.

It may interest audiences to know that Miss Lamour wears a *lava lava* instead of a *sarong* in her current jungle romance, and that Robert Preston's drapery is called a *pareu.* Aside from these innovations, and the fact that Paramount seems to have abandoned all attempts to make this latest tropical drama seem plausible, there is nothing unexpected about "Typhoon." The heroine is the child of a drunken sea captain who, in a terrific storm, snaps out of the d.t.'s just in time to lash his daughter to a raft upon which she floats to safety. Ten years later we find her in a jungle "pent house" on an East Indian island and attended by an astonishingly pleasant chimpanzee named *Coco.* Romance commences when she finds *Johnnie,* a rum-soaked beach-comber, and rehabilitates him on cocoanut milk. So much for the plot, which is not so distressing as it sounds. A fabulous East Indian villain who wears black pearls in his ears is a blood-curdling menace, and the magnificent technicolored typhoon makes a gorgeous climax. For anyone who is in the mood for extravagant adventure the picture is good fun.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining — **Children, 8 to 12** Strenuous

SHORT SUBJECTS

AMERICA'S YOUTH ◇ ◇

The March of Time, No. 9, Volume 6.

"Time" presents facts compiled by the National Youth Survey: what young people from sixteen to twenty-four are thinking about marriage and recreation and the all-important and elusive job, and what they are doing about these things. The effect of environment on the individual is shown, as well as the help given by the Y. M. C. A., the Y. W. C. A. and other organizations, and the work of the universities. The findings are hopeful, that in spite of discouragements American youth is still the happiest, healthiest and best cared for in the world.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes — **Children, 8 to 12** Little interest

❖

THE FLAG SPEAKS ◇ ◇

This inspiring short gives the history of the American flag, and expresses the high ideals of democracy which it typifies. It is so well done that no one can fail to be thrilled by the beauty of the scenes and the impressive words of John Nesbit.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent — **Children, 8 to 12** Excellent

HOME MOVIES ◇ ◇

Robert Benchley pokes fun at the numerous home movie enthusiasts and is funnier than ever. Anyone who has indulged in this hobby will recognize the mistakes and ineptitudes of the amateur. The picture reaches a climax when he blows up his cherished film by lighting a cigarette.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes — **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

❖

MIRACLE AT LOURDES ◇ ◇

M-G-M miniature.

Most modern doctors realize that faith often plays an important part in the cure of physical ills; the chief examples of mass healing of this kind occur at the River Ganges and at the famed shrine at Lourdes. The story told here is made more dramatic by the fact that the patient, a paralytic, is the wife of a young doctor whose skill and that of his colleagues is powerless to cure her. She prays at the shrine at Lourdes, and some time later, when her husband is in danger from a runaway horse, she screams and regains the use of her limbs. Interpretation is left to the audience.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Interesting — **Children, 8 to 12** Mature

❖

MEDICO ◇ ◇

Passing Parade Series. M-G-M.

The part radio plays in carrying expert medical information to ships at sea which are too small to afford doctors is explained in "Medico." When this word is flashed across the air waves all lanes are cleared for the emergency. Even advice to a sea captain on delivering a baby is supplied by remote control.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes — **Children, 8 to 12** Mature

❖

NORTHWARD HO! ◇ ◇

M-G-M miniature.

This is a super trailer, showing the great amount of work involved in great spectacular pictures, with emphasis on Northwest Passage, where the site had to be cleared and an entire village built on the banks of the Payette Lakes in Idaho, with various structures which did not appear in the film, such as dormitories, hospital, recreation rooms, etc.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Very Interesting — **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

❖

PATENT DOG WASHER ◇ ◇

Walt Disney-R.K.O. release.

Donald Duck rigs up an automatic washing machine for dogs. When the first customer misses his bath, the machine turns on *Donald Duck* and does a thoroughly hilarious job. Good spontaneous fun for all ages.

❖

PUSS GETS THE BOOT ◇ ◇

M-G-M cartoon.

The characters are three in this ingenious and really humorous Technicolor cartoon: the cat, the mouse and the menacing feet of an old colored servant. One is pleased to see the little mouse win, although the rules were not written by the Marquis of Queensbury.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Interesting — **Children, 8 to 12** Fun

❖

THE RIVETER ◇ ◇

Walt Disney-R.K.O. release.

This is a cartoon of *Mickey* when he enters the building trade, sometimes a little hair-raising when he swing from girders on the top of a sky-scraper.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes — **Children, 8 to 12** Might frighten the younger ones

❖

TUG BOAT MICKEY ◇ ◇

Walt Disney-R.K.O. release.

This is an amusing cartoon of *Mickey* and his crew who try to go to the rescue of a steamer in distress, but somehow cannot get there. Full of laughs, especially for children.

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JUNE
1940

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—o—

Alias the Deacon
Brother Orchid
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Curtain Call
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FEATURE FILMS

ALIAS THE DEACON ◇ ◇

Bob Burns, Mischa Auer, Peggy Moran, Dennis O'Keefe, Edward Brophy, Thurston Hall. Based on the stage play by John B. Hymer and LeRoy Clemens. Screen play by Nat Perrin and Charles Grayson. Direction by Christy Cabanne. Universal.

Bob Burns in this film is a card sharper posing as a deacon, who redeems himself partially by causing discomfiture of the crooked local financier. Such ethics, using religion as a cloak for gambling, are slippery to say the least. The story is replete with old time melodrama, and whatever bid the picture makes for entertainment is based on the comedy of Bob Burns, who manages to make the Deacon a likeable reprobate with a few qualities of gold. Those who like his particular brand of humor will find him as funny as ever.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No. Bad Standards **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

BROTHER ORCHID ◇ ◇

Edward G. Robinson, Ann Southern, Humphrey Bogart, Donald Crisp, Ralph Bellamy, Allen Jenkins, Charles D. Brown, Cecil Kellaway. Screen play by Earl Baldwin, based on a Collier's Magazine story by Richard Connell. Direction by Lloyd Bacon. Warner Bros.-First National.

The constant search for novelty in movies has resulted in an amazing combination of farce and brutal realism with a spiritual touch added for good measure. The title suggests a bit of cynicism. Edward G. Robinson in the role of a gangster who becomes *Brother Orchid* in a monastery, is, to say the least, thought provoking. The plot concerns a "public enemy," certainly qualified to have a numeral after his name, who retires to seek "class." When his cultural adventure ends in bankruptcy he attempts to reassume leadership of his gang. They repudiate him and attempt to murder him. Saved by monks in a monastery he finally decides, after an interim of settling old scores, to enter the sanctuary and join the life of service. Many of the farcical scenes are lively and amusing, but the brutal realism is a shocking contrast. The handling of the sequences in the monastery is facetious and a bit difficult to accept even in a farce. The incongruity may be intentional but we question its good taste. Robinson is good in his role which has no hint of *Dr. Ehrlich* in characterization. Ann Southern is amusing as an unmoral nitwit, and Ralph Bellamy has his familiar part as a simple, self-sacrificing romanticist into which he manages to inject humor and personal charm. The film's general popularity is questionable.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

CHARLIE CHAN'S MURDER CRUISE ◇ ◇

Sidney Toler, Marjorie Weaver, Lionell Atwill, Sen Yung, Robert Lowery, Don Beddoe, Leo Carroll, Cora Witherspoon, Kay Linaker. Based on Earl Derr Biggers' Charlie Chan Stories. Direction by Eugene Forde. 20th Century-Fox.

Several murders by strangling take place among the members of a cruising party, and *Charlie Chan* comes aboard the ship at Honolulu to solve the mystery. Although the plot is complicated, the director keeps interest by focusing the attention on one character, and then another, in quick succession, making each one seem individual. Sen Yung is amusing but rather amateurish as *Number Two Son.* Sidney Toler gives a good impersonation of *Chan,* bland, witty and wise. Ethical values are negative, as there is merely the solution of a puzzle.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 Too exciting and involved

❖

CURTAIN CALL ◇ ◇

Barbara Read, Alan Mowbry, Helen Vinson, Donald MacBride. Based on story by Howard J. Green. Screen play by Dalton Trumbo. Directed by Frank Woodruff. R. K. O. Radio Pictures, Inc.

The old gag about a playwright whose tragedy was so bad that it became successful as a farce is used here with minor variations to make a fairly entertaining picture. Bickerings between a director, a producer and a temperamental leading lady involve a green young authoress in experiences which convince her that she had better return to her native small town and a humdrum fiance. Since the laughs are usually at some one's expense, the humor is not of the most pleasing variety.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

DR. KILDARE'S STRANGE CASE ◇ ◇

Lew Ayres, Lionel Barrymore, Laraine Day, Shepperd Strudwick, Nat Pendleton, Walter Kingsford, Alma Kruger. Directed by Harold S. Bucquet. Screen play by Harry Ruskin and Willis Goldbeck. M. G. M.

Dr. Kildare, engaging young exponent of the latest in medical science, who is always rushing in where more experienced doctors fear to venture, this time employs his knowledge to cure a patient of insanity by administering insulin shock. Audiences who are fond of Lew Ayers, hospital scenes, and operations will find much to interest them in this film. Nevertheless many may question the advisability of supplying the public with medical information which even though accurate may be extremely misleading to the layman.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Needs adult evaluation

Children, 8 to 12 No

EARTHBOUND ◇ ◇

Warner Baxter, Andrea Leeds, Lynn Bari, Charley Grapewin, Henry Wilcoxon, Elizabeth Patterson, Russel Hicks, Christian Rub. Screen play by John Howard Lawson and Samuel G. Engel. Based on story by Basil King. Music by Alfred Newman. Photography by Lucien Andriot, A. S. C. Direction by Irving Pichel. Producer Sol. Wurtzel. Twentieth Century-Fox.

"Earthbound" has a strange theme which is not so effectively presented as it might have been had the motivation of the characters been more clearly defined at the beginning. *Nick* and *Ellen* are happily celebrating their fifth wedding anniversary in the Swiss Alps when their second honeymoon is abruptly interrupted by a wire calling *Nick* to Paris on business. There he is shot by a former inamorata. His spirit is then bound to earth until the shocking affair is cleared and the guilt placed.

This trip into the supernatural is not without interest, especially *Nick's* effort to reach through to his wife and help her get the evidence which will clear an innocent man. But his involvement with the other woman is not sufficiently explained. A strange character, the only one who can communicate with him, guides him to an understanding of his selfish life, and not until *Ellen* is willing to face facts and clear the situation in spite of the scandal it might create, can she receive help from her former husband. Humor lightens this sombre picture, and some scenes are well handled. Christian Rub gives the best performance in a character bit.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No value and doubtful interest

Children, 8 to 12 Unsuitable

❖

EDISON, THE MAN ◇ ◇

Spencer Tracy, Rita Johnson, Charles Coburn, Henry Travers, Lynne Overman, Gene Lockhart, Felix Bressart. Screen play by Talbot Jennings and Bradbury Foote. Original story Dore Schary and Hugo Butler. Directed by Clarence Brown. John W. Considine, Jr., Production. M. G. M.

The foreword thrown on the screen is a quotation from Emerson: "The true test of civilization is not in the census, nor the size of cities, nor the crops—no, but in the kind of man the country turns out." Thomas Alva Edison has exemplified this American ideal. The picture "Edison, The Man" will rank among the finest of the biographical films. It is a reverent and human portrait of a great man, of his faith in an idea, of his persistence in overcoming all obstacles and every defeat, the dramatic achievement of his vision, and his rise from poverty and debt to wealth and an acknowledged position as one of the world's greatest scientists.

The picture opens with a replica of Old Independence Hall where Thomas Edison, at eighty-two, is being honored on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of light in 1929. It

then cuts back, as the speakers are supposed to highlight the story of his life. His first opportunity comes when a stock ticker breaks down during a market flurry. Edison repairs it and is offered a job. However, preferring to experiment on a newer type, he is sent to the Western Union shop where he ultimately perfects the instrument and sells it for $40,000, thus getting his first financial start for further experiments. This money goes, other successful patents are sold, and money received is used also toward experiments on the electric light globe. He is refused loans, and his professional standing is questioned, but his loyal assistants stand by, and after prodigious effort and persistence, he achieves success. This is a dramatic episode in the film, followed by an equally thrilling one when the lighting system is installed in a portion of New York City. Throughout is woven a tender love story of Edison's courtship and marriage to Mary Stilwell who stood unfalteringly beside him through all his trials.

The wealth of available material about Mr. Edison made an accurate biography possible, and the events of his life needed little dramatizing. The action ends when Mr. Edison is thirty-five, although we have seen him first as an old man at the banquet. The moving finale comes when, in accepting the plaudits for his scientific accomplishments, he prays that science may not supercede humanity.

Spencer Tracy brings simplicity, sincerity and great humanness to the role. It is one of his finest performances among the many he has given the screen. The entire cast is exceptional. The screen play is dignified and the direction very fine. It is a dramatic and educational production which is always interesting and extremely entertaining.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent **Children, 8 to 12** Excellent

❖

FOUR SONS ◇ ◇

Don Ameche, Eugenie Leontovich, Mary Beth Hughes, Alan Curtis, George Ernest, Robert Lowery, Lionel Royce, Sig Rumann, Ludwig Stossel, Christian Rub, Torben Meyer, Egon Brecher, Eleanor Wesselhoeft, Directed by Archie Mayo. Original Screen Play by John Howard Lawson. Story by I. A. R. Wylie. Produced by Darryl F. Zanuck. Twentieth Century-Fox.

This picture shows the Nazi "Fifth Column" activities in Czecho-Slovakia and the German occupation of a hitherto peaceful village with its distressing aftermath of divided allegiance, bereavement, and desolation as seen through the eyes of a Czech mother. Without resorting to sensationalism or hysteria the film presents a deeply moving realization of what the present war has already meant to European mothers. Miss Leontovich gives a masterly interpretation of the role of *Frau Bernle,* who loses three sons, her home, her friends, and almost everything that has seemed worth living for, yet bravely sets forth to try to make a new home in America for the sake of her one remaining son and a grandchild. Quaint native costumes and the customs and modes of living in a foreign land are interestingly pictured and compensate in some measure for the artificiality of mixed accents and faces too familiar to American audiences to be altogether convincing in a supposedly foreign cast. Whatever propaganda the picture contains may be construed as a preachment against war rather than as an incitement to America to interfere in European affairs.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Depressing **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

FRENCH WITHOUT TEARS ◇ ◇

Ray Milland, Ellen Drew, Janine Darcey, David Tree, Roland Culver, Guy Middleton, Kenneth Morgan, Margaret Yarde, Tony Gable, Jim Gerald. Screen play by A. Grunwald and Ian Dalrymple from the play by Terence Rattigan. Direction by Anthony Asquith. A David E. Rose production. Paramount British Productions, Ltd.

A novel situation is treated amusingly in this film taken from the stage play of the same name. The scene is a "boarding school" in France established oddly enough for grown up, even middle aged, English boys, would-be diplomats, who wish to learn the French language in a hurry. They all seem to be having a delightful time going on bicycle picnics and to village carnivals, when a young woman arrives in their midst and upsets their routine completely. There is humor in the lines as well as in the situation and the cast is most pleasing and capable.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Very sophisticated **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

GRANDPA GOES TO TOWN ◇ ◇

James Gleason, Lucille Gleason, Russel Gleason, Harry Davenport, Lois Ranson, Tommy Ryan, Maxie Rosenbloom, Noah Beery. Direction by Gus Meins. Republic.

Grandpa saves his family from dire consequences when a rumor of a gold strike, which they unintentionally started, turned a deserted mining camp into a boom town. It is a pleasant family fare.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

❖

LA CONGA NIGHTS ◇ ◇

Hugh Herbert, Dennis O'Keefe, Constance Moore, Ferike Boros, Frank Orth, Eddie Quillan, Sally Payne, Armida, Joe Brown, Jr. Direction by Lew Landers. Universal.

An incoherent and attenuated plot deals with the transformation of a boarding house into a night club, giving the cast an opportunity to indulge in vaudeville skits and rhumba dancing. Hugh Herbert goes through

his stunt of impersonating all the female members of his family. While there are a few good sequences, on the whole it is a noisy and unprofitable performance with slapstick and cheap ridiculous situations.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Poor
Children, 8 to 12 Unsuitable

❖

LILLIAN RUSSELL ◇ ◇

Alice Faye, Don Ameche, Henry Fonda, Edward Arnold, Warren William, Leo Carrillo, Helen Westley, Dorothy Peterson, Ernest Truex, Nigel Bruce, C. Allister, Lynn Bari, Weber & Fields, Eddie Foy, Jr., Una O'Conner, Joseph Cawthorn, Elyse Knox, Joan Valerie, Alice Armand. Directed by Irving Cummings. Screen play by William Anthony McGuire. Musical direction by Alfred Newman. 20th Century-Fox.

No more difficult assignment could be given to a young film star than that of impersonating a famous actress who still lives in the memory of older film audiences. "Lillian Russell" casts Alice Faye in such a role. The film abounds in local color, lavish sets, elaborately picturesque costumes, meticulously authentic backgrounds and properties, and modernized revivals of old tunes. It is like other musical films of recent years which have attempted to revive the late eighties and early nineties, especially in its episodic story and its failure to awaken more than passing interest in the fortunes of a leading character who moves through glamorous scenes untouched by time or emotion. It is nevertheless pleasing both to the eye and to the ear and, aside from the opening sequence, is handled in good taste.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Possibly interesting
Children, 8 to 12 No interest

❖

LUCKY CISCO KID ◇ ◇

Cesar Romero, Mary Beth Hughes, Dana Andrews, Evelyn Venable, Chris-Pin Martin, Willard Robertson, Joseph Sawyer, John Sheffield. Original story by Julian Johnson. Direction by H. Bruce Humberstone. Twentieth Century-Fox.

Cesar Romero adds another to his successful "Cisco Kid" melodramas in this film packed with action, intrigue, romance and comedy. Costumes of the gay nineties, in which the action is laid, add a note of color to the settings, and picturesque desert country furnishes good background. The *Kid,* a bandit, narrowly escapes lynching when someone appropriates his name in a crime in which he is definitely not involved. He then assumes a *Robin Hood* role, robbing the rich to relieve the poor, and at last uncovers a local criminal gang among the respected citizens.

This Western action melodrama provides exceedingly light entertainment. The ethics are questionable, the law is held up to ridicule, and the good looks and personal charm of the "hero" as well as the Good Samaritan role he plays make a sympathetic character out of a notorious outlaw, who no doubt, would prove to be a most uncomfortable person to meet off the screen.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 A matter of taste
Children, 8 to 12 Questionable value

❖

MANHATTAN HEARTBEAT ◇ ◇

Robert Sterling, Virginia Gilmore, Joan Davis. From a novel by Vina Delmar. Screen play by Harold Buchman, Clark Andrews, Jack Jungmeyer, Jr., and Edith Skouras. Direction by David Burton. 20th Century-Fox.

There is nothing very new in the story of a boy and a girl who fall in love, marry, and face the crisis of having a baby, but in this picture there is a certain naturalness of treatment plus several good characterizations which make it seem worth while. The two leads are attractive young Robert Sterling and Virginia Gilmore. Joan Davis as the wife's friend has the most original part. The wild experience towards the end when *Johnny* substitutes for the test pilot of a plane, is a typical Hollywood touch, and one wishes that there might have been a more normal solution. It is good entertainment if one is not in too critical a mood.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Little interest
Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

OPENED BY MISTAKE ◇ ◇

Charles Ruggles, Janice Logan, Robert Paige, William Frawley, Florence Shirley, Byron Foulger. Direction by George Archainbaud. Paramount.

It scarcely seems necessary to blacken the hero's reputation at the outset by making him irresponsible and definitely dishonest, since the beginning has practically nothing to do with the plot, and the hero turns out to be a decent and fairly intelligent person as the reels go by. They go very fast indeed in the mad pursuit of the right owner of a trunk containing the body of a murdered woman. There are several original and colorful situations. Charlie Ruggles as assistant sleuth supplies the comedy in his best manner. It is a program picture, not outstanding, but guaranteed to keep anyone from taking a snooze.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Needs some adult evaluation
Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

OUR TOWN ◇ ◇

William Holden, Martha Scott, Fay Bainter, Beulah Bondi, Thomas Mitchell, Guy Kibbe, Stuart Erwin, Frank Craven, Doro Merande, Philip Wood, Ruth Toby, Charles Trowbridge. Screen play by Thornton Wilder, Frank Craven and Harry Chandlee, adapted from a play by Thornton Wilder. Photography by Bert Glennon, A. S. C. Music by Aaron Copland. Direction by Sam Wood. A Sol Lesser Production. United Artists.

"Our Town" is an unconventional and arresting picture. It catches the poignant poetic

beauty of Thorton Wilder's play, and the combination of realism and fantasy is deeply moving. The stage play was given on a bare stage, without sets or props. One's own imagination furnished the background. However the great realism of the screen made this impractical and the settings have added increased artistry to the production. It is the story of simple, human people in a small New England town in the early nineteen hundreds, the daily routine of living, birth, marriage, death—the real drama of life, not the spectacular. It points out the appealing significance of commonplace events and sends one forth with an increased awareness of the importance of each day and the deeper meaning of life itself.

It is a beautiful adaptation, and credit must be given all who collaborated on the production. Frank Craven introduces the audience to *Grover's Corners* and interrupts the action to explain the passage of time with the changes in the town and its inhabitants throughout the years. By retaining this technique much of the beauty of the original lines has been preserved. It is intimate and warmly human. One feels as though one were a part of the little town and were talking to a friend about friends. The settings recreate a past which will never come again, the unmechanized age when women cooked on ranges, baked their own bread, made clothes, gossiped over the fence, and found their relaxation at church socials. It brings a faint nostalgia for days when living seemed less complex.

Martha Scott, who played in the stage version also, is *Emily,* and she gives an exceptionally sensitive performance as the innocent young girl. Others in the cast are perfectly chosen: William Holden as the boy, Thomas Mitchell and Fay Bainter as the parents of *George,* Guy Kibbee and Beulah Bondi as the parents of *Emily.* The lesser roles are equally outstanding. The slight change in ending will seem happier to many since it omits the feeling of frustration which the death of *Emily* had given.

There are a number of scenes which stand out unforgettably: the touching love scene in the drug store; the talk between father and son; the wedding preparations; the women coming home from choir practice; and *Emily* on the border line, seeing her beautiful farm and reliving her fourteenth birthday. Her will to live, to appreciate life to the utmost is a challenge to all of us who may perhaps see only too dimly the beauty to be found each day.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Mature

Children, 8 to 12 Too mature to interest

PHANTOM RAIDERS ◇ ◇

Walter Pidgeon, Florence Rice, Donald Meek, Joseph Schildkraut, John Carroll, Nat Pendleton, Steffi Duna. Direction by Jacques Tourneur. M. G. M.

A ring of crooks who operate by sinking ships off the coast of Mexico by radio-controlled time bombs finally meet their nemesis in the person of the detective, *Nick Carter.* Destruction of steamers, entailing a heavy loss of life is not a pleasant basis for a story, although the mystery is handled in an interesting way and there is a certain amount of comedy relief. Joseph Schildkraut makes an unusual and colorful villain and Walter Pidgeon a suitable *Nick Carter.* There is a light love interest which might be dispensed with, as neither of the women adds much to the picture.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too ruthless

Children, 8 to 12 No indeed

❖

SANDY IS A LADY ◇ ◇

Baby Sandy, Mischa Auer, Nan Grey, Tom Brown, Eugene Pallette, Billy Gilbert, Kenneth Brown, Billy Lenhart. Story and screen play by Charles Grayson. Direction by Charles Lamont. Universal.

Baby Sandy fills a large part of this feature length film and always holds her audience by her sweetness and natural charm. The story, which is not too strong, relates the adventures of a baby who escapes from her juvenile caretakers while her mother goes marketing and finds her way into many strange and dangerous places. When she climbs along a steel girder sixteen stories above the ground, it is realistic enough to bring a pang to the heart of anyone connected with small children. It is mainly farcical, however, and the two other children, Kenneth Brown and Billy Lenhart, as well as Mischa Auer and Billy Gilbert add substantially to the fun. If several parts which are out-and-out slapstick, were deleted, it would improve the film.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 Might frighten young children

❖

SKI PATROL ◇ ◇

Luli Deste, Philip Dorn, Samuel S. Hinds, Stanley Fields, Edward Norris, Hardie Albright, Kathryn Adams. Direction by Lew Landers. Universal.

These are days when it is difficult for many to endure even the most exceptionally well done war film. "Ski Patrol" is well done. It has fine photography and direction. The story is one which might have happened, and it is treated with understanding, and pity for those of all nations who must die in the horrors of battle. The main characters are three boys, Finnish, Russian and American, who win honors on the Olympic ski teams of 1936 and a few years later par-

ticipate in the war in Finland. While the Russians are shown as brutal and ruthless in their attack on the tiny country, it is a Russian as an individual, who proves himself capable of heroic sacrifice at the end. The most interesting sequences show the descent of parachute troops and the tactics of the ski patrols in the snow and ice of the mountains.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too terrible

Children, 8 to 12 Very bad for them

❖

SUSAN AND GOD ◇ ◇

Joan Crowford, Frederic March, Rita Quigley, Ruth Hussey, Rose Hobart, John Carroll, Nigel Bruce, Bruce Cabot, Constance Collier, Norma Mitchell. Based on the play by Rachel Crothers. Screen play by Anita Loos. Direction by George Cukor. Hunt Stromberg Production. M. G. M.

When *Susan Trexel* becomes interested in a new religious cult on one of her frequent jaunts to Europe, she returns to her neglected family enthusiastically to thrust her "discovery of God" upon her gay and shallow social clique. They are irritated by her preachments. Her husband and young daughter are greatly in need of spiritual motivation in their lives and, believing her sincere, they make an effort to remodel their way of living. But *Susan,* completely absorbed in her own exhibitionism, is indifferent—even hostile—and ignoring them, sets busily to work running disastrously the lives of her resentful friends. In the end the idealism of which she prattles becomes a boomerang. In spite of herself, she is lifted out of the chaos caused by her selfishness and vanity, and her husband and daughter are made happy in the security of a normal home.

It is a sophisticated comedy which sharply ridicules those casual and shallow thinkers who parade the form but do not express the principles of religion. Whether the denouement gives a feeling of sincerity will depend upon individual reaction, but not intended as a criticism of any sect or trend in thinking, the plot emphasizes the necessity for honesty and living up to the rules in a practical application to meet the needs underlying human relations. Satire is at times as effective as preachments.

The film version follows very closely the story as produced on the stage and loses none of its pungency of characterization in the hands of the competent cast. Miss Crawford's performance shows her in a new type of role which should do much to enhance her popularity. Fredric March gives a fine interpretation as does Rita Quigley. The others are little more than background to this trio. The direction is notably good. The picture will appeal to the more sophisticated audience taste.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Very sophisticated Needs adult evaluation

Children, 8 to 12 No

THOSE WERE THE DAYS ◇ ◇

William Holden, Bonita Granville, Ezra Stone, Judith Barrett, Baughan Glaser. Based on the stories ("At Good Old Siwash") by George Fitch. Screen play by Don Hartman. Direction by Jay Theodore Reed. Paramount.

A very light, gay, exaggerated story tells of student life in the early nineteen hundreds, as recalled by a judge who acquired a college prankster for a son-in-law. *Petey Simmons,* an egotistical freshman, finds himself in a mounting tide of trouble, from which he can find no escape except making love to the judge's daughter; this plan backfires. The action is a little slow but those who remember the costumes and the hair dressing and the songs of that time will experience a nostalgia for those good old peaceful days. Young moderns will wonder if life could ever have been like that.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Amusing

Children, 8 to 12 Little interest

❖

WATERLOO BRIDGE ◇ ◇

Vivien Leigh, Robert Taylor, Lucile Watson, Virginia Field, Maria Ouspenskaya, C. Aubrey Smith. Screen play by S. N. Behrman, Hans Rameau, and George Froeschel. Based on the play by Robert E. Sherwood. Sidney Franklin Production. Direction by Mervyn LeRoy. M. G. M.

With the sickening reality of totalitarian war in Europe, it is well that Robert Sherwood's play of the last great war has no scenes of the battlefield and that it possesses enough of the flavor of times past to make it bearable. It tells the story of two young people who meet on *Waterloo Bridge* and seek shelter from an air raid, a British officer and a wistful, childlike ballet dancer who expects little of life and for that reason finds his love almost too wonderful to believe. Into the few hours remaining before he leaves for France, is crowded more happiness than many find in a lifetime. Later ignored by his family and believing him dead, she feels that nothing matters and turns to a way of livelihood which can only bring tragedy. The ethics are clearly defined, and the girl, the man, and his mother all suffer, not only because of the obvious defiance of social standards, but also for those subtler cruelties which society does not always recognize in human relationship.

The screen version has been changed from the original but is still an appealing and emotional love story. The girl is idealized to a greater extent, and by making the man come from a higher social class, the well known barrier of English "family tradition" is introduced to glamorize the tragedy. It is gratifying to see Vivien Leigh in a part the antithesis of *Scarlett,* and to find that she does it equally well. She is lovely as the estatic young girl and has a deeply emotional appeal in the serious scenes, the more

effective because of her truly English restraint. Robert Taylor proves himself a much finer actor than he has been in the past and his performance, vital but never overdone, should rank him with the best. Virginia Field gives a fine interpretation as *Kitty,* and Maria Ouspenskaya, Lucile Watson and C. Aubrey Smith are worthy of special praise. Photography, musical background, and acting and direction combine to present a finished product.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too mature and emotional

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

THE WAY OF ALL FLESH ◇ ◇

Akim Tamiroff, Gladys George, William Henry, John Hartley, Marilyn Knowlden, Betty McLaughlin, James West, Darryl Hickman, June Hedin, Norma Nelson, Tommy Bupp, Muriel Angelus. Screen play by Lenore Coffe. Based on story by Lajos Biro and Jules Furthman. Directed by Louis King. Paramount.

Still an effective emotional drama, though perhaps rather old-fashioned in its sentimentality, "The Way of All Flesh" comes again to the screen. Those who saw Emil Jannings in the leading role and who remember his characterization as one of the unforgettable screen portraits will find Akim Tamiroff less impressive, although he gives a first class performance.

Paul Kriza, played by Akim Tamiroff, is the model husband and father, a respected citizen in his home town, and the holder of a responsible position in a bank. He is sent to New York on a business mission to deliver some securities. He unwittingly falls into the hands of a confidence gang, succumbs to the flattery of an unscruplous woman, makes merry, and comes to, minus his beard, his securities, and his self-respect. When he reads a newspaper account of his heroic and honorable death, after what has really happened, he realizes he cannot return to his home and family. Thenceforth his life is one of wandering expiration of his sins. While it is undoubtedly salutary to believe that vice is always punished, to the mature mind aware of human frailty, the price paid by *Krisya* for his brief weakness seems disporportionate. The scenes of family life are delightful and make the father's lonely existence seem even more tragic.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Very emotional

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

WOLF OF NEW YORK ◇ ◇

Edmund Lowe, Rose Hobart, James Stephenson, Jerome Curran, William Demarest, Edward Gargan. Original story by Leslie T. White and Arnold Belgard. Direction by William McCann. Republic.

This is an unpretentious but entertaining mystery story, well acted and directed.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 Mature

❖

WOMEN IN WAR ◇ ◇

Elsie Janis, Wendy Barrie, Patric Knowles, Mae Clark, Dennie Moore, Dorothy Peterson, Barbara Pepper. Original screen play by F. Hugh Herbert and Doris Anderson. Direction by John Auer. Republic Studios.

The Great War of today, or as it was in 1939, is the background for this story, but except for the emotional stress which any suggestion of its possibilities makes upon an audience, the actual scenes of conflict do not give an impression of great reality. The title more aptly applies to the spiritual struggle between the women in the group: one girl's battle against the prejudice of the women with whom she is thrown; the efforts of her mother to affect discipline in her; and the girl's final spiritual regeneration. This has definite human interest. It is not a glorification of women's part in war, but rather an individual case study. *Pamela,* a daughter of a broken family, who has never known her mother, and who has no respect for either parent, is tried for manslaughter. The audience appreciates her innocence, but she is her own worst enemy at the trial because of her apparent lack of feeling and her bitter outbursts which give rise to terrible publicity and general prejudice. Her mother unknown to her, is an army nurse. She saves *Pamela* by enlisting the sympathy of the Court in the plan of having her enrolled in a Red Cross unit en route to the front. The conflict of personalities, the sane devotion of the mother, and the girl's regeneration are interestingly portrayed. The disregard of military rules may perhaps be over-

looked for the human touch. Wendy Barrie is excellent as *Pamela*. She displays a sympathetic understanding of the conflict emotions demanded by the role, and successfully avoids sentimentality. It is a pleasure to see Elsie Janis on the screen. Her screen technique falters at times, but she is sincere, and her personality is definitely an asset. Others in the cast are good, especially Mae Clark in a tragic part. The film is interesting and not too emotional in spite of the background of war.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Questionable value — **Children, 8 to 12** No

YOU CAN'T FOOL YOUR WIFE ◇ ◇

Lucille Ball, James Ellison, Robert Coote, Virginia Vale, Emma Dunn, Elaine Shepard, William Halligan, Oscar O'Shea. Screen play by Jerry Cady from a story by Richard Carroll and Ray McCarey. Musical score by Roy Webb. Directed by Ray McCarey. R. K. O. Radio Pictures, Inc.

To drive away wartime blues this absurd, somewhat risque farce may prove effective. In it a young married couple, about to part because of a dreadful mother-in-law, are reconciled in spite of the blundering assistance of the husband's well-meaning business acquaintance. The plot which may have borrowed some of its angles from "The Guardsman" is an entertaining one, and the cast is unusually good for such an unpretentious picture.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No — **Children, 8 to 12** No

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FEATURE FILMS

ALL THIS AND HEAVEN TOO ◇ ◇

Bette Davis, Charles Boyer, Jeffrey Lynn, Barbara O'Neill, Virginia Weidler, Helen Westley, Walter Hampden, Henry Daniell, Harry Davenport, Geo. Coulouris, Montagu Love, Janet Beecher, June Lockhart, Ann Todd, Richard Nichols, Fritz Leiber. From the novel by Rachel Field. Screen play by Casey Robinson. Music by Max Steiner. Direction by Anatole Litvak. Jack L. Warner Production. Warner Bros.

Seldom has a novel been transferred to the screen so successfully as Rachel Field's story of her own great-aunt, *Henriette Desportes,* who served as governess in the family of the *Duc de Praslin* almost a hundred years ago and became an unhappy adjunct in the trial of that nobleman for the murder of his wife. "Do you come into this household by your own free will?" asks the ancient servitor when she enters the massive doors and ascends a staircase where the shadows from the windows project a pattern of spider webs upon the wall. It is a household of surging passion and hatred, and in it the young governess marks off a circle of serenity and strength, providing a refuge for the four children and the duke himself. In the end the baleful influence of the duchess is too strong for them and results in the tragedy which echoes through France and has some bearing on the downfall of the king. Fortunately the latter part of the book, which lacked vitality, is omitted, although the beginning and end of the picture give a suggestion of a happier life for *Henriette* in the New World.

Every part is well played. Bette Davis shows quiet strength and beauty and deep tenderness, Charles Boyer has full understanding of the French nobleman's character, and in every way from his appearance to his lightly slurred accent is close to perfection. Barbara O'Neill gives a vivid impression of the self-tortured duchess. If Jeffrey Lynn seems negative, it is perhaps because he is linked to the main plot as an observer. The numerous children in the cast are good without exception; little Virginia Weidler is a seasoned actress, June Lockhart has a wistful appeal, and Richard Nichols as the four-year-old *Reynald* is an exquisite child who looks like a little French boy and talks like a real child.

It is a long picture, and the pace is leisurely but not too slow if one is to appreciate the fine composition of the scenes, the mellow lighting, the rich strains of Max Steiner's music which heighten the emotional effect. Great praise is due Anatole Litvak, who also directed "Mayerling." Here, as in that film, there is a haunting beauty of another land, another time, and of a love strong enough to be remembered when the hearts that held it are gone.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Mature **Children, 8 to 12** No

ANDY HARDY MEETS DEBUTANTE ◇ ◇

Lewis Stone, Mickey Rooney, Cecilia Parker, Fay Holden, Judy Garland, Ann Rutherford, Diana Lewis, Sara Haden. Direction by Geo. B. Seitz. M.-G.-M.

Andy is still having "girl-trouble," and in claiming acquaintance with New York's No. 1 debutante, he almost takes on more than he can handle. It is little *Betsy Booth,* whom *Andy* overlooks in his scheme of life, who allows him to save his face with the home-town school gang and to ruin their plan to make him ridiculous. *Betsy* is delightfully played by Judy Garland. Mickey Rooney's acting is more subdued than it used to be in the earlier *Hardy* films, and he presents a more normal youth. However, his role seems at times suspiciously unsophisticated, and when the manager of *Club Sirocco* suggests that *Andy* needs a sound spanking there were those in the audience who were heard to murmur a fervent "Amen." While the picture drags in places, this scene is definitely not slow. On the contrary!

However, the film is good fare. Lewis Stone is splendid, as usual, as the ideal father who tries to explain to the dejected adolescent that "class, money, and society" are not necessary in America where brave men fought to give all citizens equal opportunity in a democracy.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good — **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

❖

ANNE OF WINDY POPLARS ◇ ◇

Anne Shirley, James Ellison, Henry Travers, Patric Knowles, Slim Summerville, Elizabeth Patterson. From the novel by L. M. Montgomery. Direction by Jack Hively. RKO Radio.

A change of scene carries *Anne,* formerly of *Green Gables,* to a small town ruled by a stiff-necked family by the name of *Pringle* who bitterly resent her appointment as vice-principal. It requires patience, zeal, even heroism, to win a place in their esteem. The film has a modicum of the quaintness and charm which endeared L. M. Montgomery stories to young readers of three decades ago, and Anne Shirley and the little girl, Joan Carroll, perform their parts with sincerity, but the plot lacks probability, and most of the characterizations are vague. Considering the number of people on the sets and the number of local events recorded, the picture is singularly lacking in dramatic force.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes — **Children, 8 to 12** Passable

❖

THE CAPTAIN IS A LADY ◇ ◇

Charles Coburn, Beulah Bondi, Virginia Grey, Helen Broderick, Billie Burke, Dan Dailey, Jr., Helen Westley, Marjorie Main, Cecil Cunningham. Based on the play "Old Lady 31" by Rachel Crothers, and the novel by Louise Forsslund. Screen play by Harry Clork. Direction by Robert B. Sinclair. M.-G.-M.

This remake of an old silent film is designed for the comedy which arises when a hardy sea captain, after cheating in order to be able to buy a place for his wife in an Old Ladies' Home, finds himself in it too, and known as "Old Lady 31." His embarrassment is acute, and the sentimental attentions of the other inmates sting him to revolt. Fortunately an opportunity arises which allows him to recapture his manly esteem and permit a melodramatic solution of his financial difficulties.

It is a naive presentation in which Charles Coburn carries the load to make it entertaining. He is well cast. Although excellent actresses appear in character roles, the story is too obvious in treatment to have other than slight interest.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No appeal — **Children, 8 to 12** Boring

❖

CROSS COUNTRY ROMANCE ◇ ◇

Gene Raymond, Wenry Barrie, Hedda Hopper, Billy Gilbert, George P. Huntley, Berton Churchill. Direction by Frank Woodruff. RKO-Radio.

The cinema audience will recognize the pattern of "It Happened One Night," which has recurred at intervals ever since that highly successful picture was made. In this variation the spoiled heiress escapes on her wedding day in a flimsy concoction of underthings and pursues a serious-minded young doctor across the continent in his auto trailer. It is funnier than one anticipates. As the young doctor, Gene Raymond has more dignity than usual, which makes him more attractive and at the same time more vulnerable to the sallies of Wendy Barrie, who handles her part with accent on real comedy. Billy Gilbert has a laughable scene at the lunch counter. On the whole the picture has enough good points to make it acceptable in the light entertainment field.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No! Features irresponsibility — **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

DR. CHRISTIAN MEETS THE WOMEN ◇

Jean Hersholt, Dorothy Lovett, Edgar Kennedy, Rod LaRocque, Frank Albertson, Marilyn Merrick, Maude Eburn. Original screen play by Marion Orth. Direction by William McGann. RKO-Radio.

A quack doctor with a quick reducing method wins over the women of *Dr. Christian's* small town. The serious illness of a young girl who has followed the get-thin diet too assiduously calls for prompt help, and *Dr. Christian's* sound theories and ability awaken the townspeople to their folly. The story lacks the wit and subtlety of effective satire, and the melodramatic climax is out of

mood with the farcical tone of the previous scenes. It may entertain the adolescent audience, but it will hardly impress with its "message," for although that message is a wholesome warning against quackery, its delivery is tiresome.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable

Children, 8 to 12 Uninteresting

❖

THE GHOST BREAKERS ◇ ◇

Bob Hope, Paulette Goddard, Richard Carlson, Paul Lukas, Willie Best, Pedor de Cordoba, Virginia Brissac, Noble Johnson, Anthony Quinn. Screen play by Walter DeLeon based on play by Paul Dickey and Charles W. Goddard. Direction by George Marshall. Musical score by Ernst Toch. Paramount.

Escapist literature has a place in life and certainly in a world gone mad, escapist films should play a helpful role as well. "The Ghost Breakers" is a good example. It has thrills a plenty: a haunted house, skeletons, ghosts, sliding panels, murders, Zombies! You don't believe in Zombies? Neither do we. But we saw one and it scared us stiff. If seeing is believing—we believe. However, in spite of the spine chilling action, it is one of the funniest films ever. Bob Hope is an A-1 comedian. He has the fine balance of combining comedy with natural, unexaggerated acting, which makes the humor more startlingly funny. The dialogue is hilarious, and the mystery is lightened throughout by comic situations in which Willie Best plays an important role. Paulette Goddard is a lovely heroine who really does not need to disrobe so frequently to attract attention. But that is a minor criticism in an hour of exciting, jolly fun. The musical score is cleverly devised to enhance moods.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Very funny

Children, 8 to 12 Terrifying for Many. Depends on individual maturity

❖

GIRL IN 313 ◇ ◇

Florence Rice, Kent Taylor, Lionel Atwill, Katharine Aldridge, Mary Treen, Jack Carson. Original story by Hilda Stone. Screen play by Barry Trivers and Clay Adams. Direction by Ricardo Cortez. Twentieth Century-Fox.

This is a routine, B class picture with a rather complex story about a charming girl detective who joins a band of jewel thieves to trick them into revealing their activities. She is saved at the zero hour when her affiliations become known to the criminals. A false note is injected by having her fall in love with one of the gang. She promises to wait for him to serve his richly deserved sentence. The direction is obvious and uninspired. Florence Rice plays her role capably. The film will appeal to the more naive who still believe that Sherlock Holmes is a member of British Scotland Yard.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 No

LOVE, HONOR, AND OH, BABY ◇ ◇

Wallace Ford, Kathryn Adams, Mona Barrie, Donald Woods, Warren Hymer, Marc Lawrence, Hobart Cavanaugh. Screen play by Clarence Upson Young, adapted from original story by Elizabeth Troy. Direction by Charles Lamont. Universal Studios.

The title has practically nothing to do with the plot of this film, but it serves as well as any other for the series of ridiculous situations it embellishes. The hero, jilted in love, hires a gang to put him out of his emotional misery so that the suicide clause in his insurance policy may be evaded. When unexpected events cause him to change his mind about the plan much footage is spent convincing the gang to let him alone. Enjoyment will be a matter of taste.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

MARYLAND ◇ ◇

Walter Brennan, Fay Bainter, Brenda Joyce, Charles Ruggles, Sidney Blackmer, Ben Carter, Ernest Whitman, Hattie McDaniel, John Payne, Marjorie Weaver. Original screen play by Ethel Hill and Jack Andrews. Direction by Henry King. Twentieth Century-Fox. Photographed in technicolor.

The story of "Maryland" is not a new one, for again we have a proud old Southern family reared in the tradition of wealth and gracious living, whose life seems destined to center around their love of fine horses. They are divided through tragedy with the reconciliation dependent upon a horse race, this time the Hunt Cup Race, the famous Maryland Steeplechase. However, it is rather well told and it is pictured in beautiful color with the lovely Maryland countryside as background. Ingenious comedy lightens the depressing effect which the bitterness of *Charlotte Danfield* gives the plot. *Charlotte* loses her husband when, at her insistence, he rides a favorite, high tempered colt in a fox hunt and is killed. She disposes of her stables, orders the colt shot, and refuses to allow her son to ride at all. Years later the horse is discovered alive. When *Charlotte's* son wishes to ride *Cavalier,* son of the once famous *Maryland Maid,* the climax develops.

The settings are beautiful and lavish. Walter Brennan plays a somewhat similar role to that which he played in "Kentucky," but it is not so rich a part and thus less interesting. The colored players, notably Ben Carter as *Shadrach,* steal the picture, and the revival meeting, though perhaps overemphasized, is the high light of the film. Fay Bainter is excellent in an unsympathetic role, the young people are adequate, but the thrill of the actual 1940 Maryland Steeplechase is constantly interrupted by close-ups of John Payne bobbing up and down on something, and the illusion of reality is shattered by irrepressible laughter.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining

Children, 8 to 12 Yes

MILLIONAIRES IN PRISON ◇ ◇

Lee Tracy, Linda Hayes, Raymond Walburn, Morgan Conway, Truman Bradley, Virginia Vale, Cliff Edwards, Paul Guilfoyle, Thurston Hall. Screen play by Lynn Root and Frank Fenton from a story by Martin Mooney. Direction by Ray McCarey. RKO-Radio.

Among the numerous program fillers, this production will more than hold its own. It is a farce, rather curiously combined with drama, set within a prison to which five millionaires have been sentenced simultaneously. Two are apparent morons interested only in clothes and food. They are victims of an unscrupulous lawyer who got them into their fix. Two are real crooks who try to continue their illegal business methods inside the penitentiary. The fifth is a once prominent physician paying the penalty of too high living which climaxed in manslaughter. The comedy is absurd but amusing, and the drama consists in the clever machinations of a trusty which result in the rehabilitation of the doctor and the thwarting of the crooks. The serious moments are interesting and the farcical situations innocuous and laughably absurd. The characterizations by the men are good.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Inoffensive, but of no value

Children, 8 to 12 Unsuitable

✣

THE MORTAL STORM ◇ ◇

Margaret Sullavan, James Stewart, Robert Young, Frank Morgan, Robert Stack, Irene Rich, Maria Ouspenskaya, Bonita Granville. Based on book by Phyllis Bottome. Screen play by Claudine West, Anderson Ellis and George Froeschel. Direction by Frank Borzage. M.-G.-M.

"The Mortal Storm" is a tragic reminder that down through the centuries, under the ægis of what is speciously referred to as civilization, man has been making human sacrifice to appease his changing gods.

The story, based on the book by Phyllis Bottome, tells of *Professor Roth* and his charming family who have enjoyed a gracious, affectionate, tolerant life until dramatic changes begin to evidence themselves when Hitler comes to power in 1933. The patriotic enthusiasm of the professor's foster sons for a greater Germany leads them to join the Nazi party, but soon subversive changes take place in their mental attitudes which distort normal values. There follows a disintegration of moral fibre which the sound members of the group cannot stem, and the family is broken up. It is a bitter commentary on all ideologies of intolerance and nihilism.

Frank Borzage directs with delicate discernment the various emotional attitudes of his actors and does not miss the dramatic possibilities of sharp contrast in social behavior. He rarely lapses into the crudity of showing brutality, but lets the imagination of the audience come to its own conclusion. The cast was chosen with inspired perception. Frank Morgan as the professor whose convictions would not permit him to be less than himself, gives a remarkable portrayal. Robert Young as a political zealot of Germany's new order, makes no compromise with an unsympathic role. Margaret Sullavan, with sincerity and winsome beauty, capably handles what might have been a mousy role in less sensitive hands.

The film ends with a Utopian epilogue advising that this mortal storm will end only when man walks with God. It is strong fare, skilfully disguised by technical perfection, but it is no program for an escaptist.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Very mature

Children, 8 to 12 Emotionally disturbing

✣

MY LOVE CAME BACK ◇ ◇

Olivia de Havilland, Jeffery Lynn, Eddie Albert, Jane Wyman, Charles Winninger, Spring Byington, Grant Mitchell, S. Z. Sakall. William Orr, Mabel Taliaferro. Screen play by Ivan Goff, Robert Buckner and Earl Baldwin from a story by Walter Reisch. Direction by Kurt Bernhardt. Musical director, Leo Forbstein. Warner. Bros.

A talented, impecunious young violinist is befriended by a wealthy patron of the arts, who secretly buys her a scholarship in a conservatory of music and escorts her to musical events. This platonic relationship is misunderstood but the situation is wisely handled by the wife of the philanthropist, who realizes that *Amelia* is naively innocent and is in love with a young man: also that her middle-aged husband is only seeking to recapture the illusion of youth. The basic conflict is between classical and swing music, and the musical score cleverely blends the two. The young students of the Conservatory finally convince the Heads of the school that modern rhythm may have a place in their teaching.

It is delightfully light and entertaining, combining music, comedy and romance, and though the trusting simplicity of *Amelia* seems a little incomprehensible in this modern day, still the sophistication is admirably handled. Credit is due to Kurt Bernhardt for his direction and to Leo Forbstein for the musical arrangement. The cast is good.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Amusing

Children, 8 to 12 If interested

NEW MOON ◇ ◇

Jeanette MacDonald, Nelson Eddy, Mary Boland, Grant Mitchell, H. B. Warner. Based on Operetta "New Moon." Screen play by Jacques Deval and Robert Arthur. Music by Sigmund Romberg. Musical direction by Herbert Stothart. Direction by Robert Z. Leonard. M.-G.-M.

This light operetta is a far cry from the serious problem dramas of today or the smart, sophisticated comedies, and it offers a refreshing contrast. It has been considerably elaborated from the original stage production, and is delightful in its gay improbability and its romantic fantasy. At the time of the French Revolution, a shipload of bondsmen come to New Orleans to be auctioned off to the plantation owners. A princely sympathizer with the revolutionary cause is among the men. The romance between him and the lovely *Marianne de Beaumanoir* travels the usual difficult road to ultimate happiness.

Nelson Eddy and Miss MacDonald have greatly improved their acting technique and are delightful. The settings are beautiful and costumes exquisite. The musical score is lovely with its tuneful familiarity.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Sentimental: but good

Children, 8 to 12
No objections if interested

❖

PRIVATE AFFAIRS ◇ ◇

Nancy Kelly, Hugh Herbert, Roland Young, Robert Cummings, Montagu Love, Jonathan Hale, Florence Shirley, Mary Forbes, Granville Bates. Screen play by Charles Grayson, Leonard Spigelgass and Peter Molne. Based on story, "One of the Bullertons," by Walton Green. Direction by Albert S. Rogell. Universal.

An obscure stock exchange clerk who, in his youth, was disinherited by his wealthy socialite father for marrying the girl of his choice, tries to help his daughter marry the man she loves against her grandfather's wishes. He pretends to be an important member of the Board of the Stock Exchange, and the bluff wins him an executive position. The plot concerns his efforts to promote business among the elite of Boston, and also to prevent them from being swindled by his boss. Incidentally his father is won over, and his daughter's affairs end happily.

The audience feels little sympathy for the series of rather silly situations. The direction shows no originality, and the picture seems to have been hastily produced. Roland Young gives an amusing characterization, but the broadly farcical, inconsequential story provides very light entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
No value

Children, 8 to 12
No value nor interest

SAFARI ◇ ◇

Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Madeleine Carroll, Tullio Carminati, Lynne Overman, Muriel Angelus, Billy Gilbert. Screen play by Delmar Daves. Based on story by Paul Hervey Fox. Direction by Edward H. Griffith. Paramount.

There is a great deal of triangle and not much safari in this mildly entertaining film. Two beautiful women, exquisitely coifed and gowned, accompany a wealthy Baron on a hunting expedition to darkest Africa. Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. (for some reason still kept in the jungle by producers) becomes the guide, and one woman deserts the party when they start into the interior. Thus the triangle —*Linda* (Madeleine Carroll, the *Baron* (Tullio Carminati), and the handsome guide. *Linda,* in order to make herself more desirable to her suitors, feigns interest in the guide, but the boorish behavior of the *Baron* turns her love from him to the other man.

It is diverting enough hokum with one outstanding performance by Lynn Overman, whose *Jock McPhail* dominates all his scenes and lends color, vitality and spice to an otherwise routine melodrama. In spite of the obvious faults, the humor, the charm of the leads, and the beauty of Miss Carroll, in contrast to primitive backgrounds, provide moderate enjoyment for those in not too critical a frame of mind.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
No value; a weak adventure tale

Children, 8 to 12
Too violent in action: no

❖

STREET OF MEMORIES ◇ ◇

Lynne Roberts, Guy Kibbee, John McGuire, Ed Gargan, Hobart Cavanaugh, Jerome Cowan, Charles Waldron, Sterling Holloway, Original screen play by Robert Lees and Frederic I. Rinaldo. Direction by Shepard Traube. Twentieth Century-Fox.

What this film lacks in a plot device is more than balanced by its human qualities and by the fact that it is concerned with a social problem with which society must eventually reckon. No remedy is offered, but it is interesting and thought provoking.

Joe Mason, one of the great army of unemployed youth, is found wandering on Main Street, Los Angeles. His struggles to get work, his conflict with the police, and his despairing hopelessness are ended when he is located by his wealthy father and is found to have been a victim of amnesia. The young principals in the cast are new to the screen, but their sincerity and the finished support of Guy Kibbee, Hobart Cavanaugh and others succeeds in putting the theme across surprisingly well in spite of certain unrealities.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Depends on maturity

Children, 8 to 12
No

THREE FACES WEST ◇ ◇

John Wayne, Sigrid Gurie, Charles Coburn, Wolfgang Zilzer, Spencer Charters, Sonny Bupp. Original screen play by F. Hugh Herbert and Joseph Moncure. Direction by Bernard Vorhaus. Republic.

Two social problems are presented in this film: one, that of the foreign refugee who asks a place in the American scheme of living; the other, that of the American farmer who meets frustration in the dust bowl and seeks the right to move to more fertile lands. The refugees, a skilled Viennese doctor and his daughter, are disheartened by the aspect of the town to which they have been sent after a "We, The People," broadcast. Economic distress, bitter cold, winds which destroy crops and soil, a severe epidemic among the inhabitants (which the physician attempts to stem amidst insanitary conditions), and the intolerance of the small town people toward foreigners, contribute to their unhappy situation. They are no sooner settled than the whole town migrates to the forests of Oregon, and they are aided by one of the farmers who leads the trek. The difficulty of this expedition carries out the idea first presented by "Grapes of Wrath." In addition, there are dissensions, bitterness and ugly fights among the group, finally alleviated by the Viennese, who pleads with the migrants to pioneer and struggle toward a new goal.

The film is novel in subject matter and interesting in that it presents the contribution in skill and knowledge which European refugees may offer our country. It is unfortunate that the provocative material could not have been handled in a more forceful and convincing manner. It is episodic and without dramatic appeal. Californians will be grateful that the hero pleads that the migration be not toward this state, but the greater economic problem of reclamation of the wasted land is still untouched.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Very mature and possibly no interest

Children, 8 to 12
No interest

❖

TOM BROWN'S SCHOOL DAYS ◇ ◇

Sir Cedric Hardwicke, Freddie Bartholomew, Jimmy Lyndon, Billy Halop, Hughie Green, Josephine Hutchinson, Polly Moran, Ernest Cossart, Alec Craig, Ian Fulton, Gale Storm. From the novel by Thomas Hughes. Screen play by Walter Ferris, Frank Cavett, Gene Towne and Graham Baker. Musical score by Anthony Collins. Direction by Robert Stevenson. Produced by Graham Baker and Gene Towne. RKO-Radio.

"Tom Brown's School Days" is one of the earliest school stories written, and it is still rated as one of the best. Its author, Thomas Hughes, attended Rugby under the renowned Dr. Arnold, and his story was so vivid a picture of the school and its life that there was an impression that his fictional hero actually existed. The adaptation of the novel for the screen is dignified and sincere. It describes the experience of a senstive, fine boy who is loyal to the ideals of the school impressed upon him by his father, a former student. His adjustment to the high standards of behavior demanded by the Head Master conflict with those of the students who bully and haze the younger classes. He is almost expelled, suffers humiliation by the other boys but emerges ready for Oxford, a splendid example of fine, honorable youth, a triumph for the honor system.

Sir Cedric Hardwicke presents an exceptionally faithful portrait of *Dr. Thomas Arnold* as history records him. He is reported to have been a stern, uncompromising man whose appointment to the position of Head Master at Rugby was revolutionary since he insisted on creating the honor system to make Rugby not only a place of classical learning, but a school where character could be trained to prepare youths for the responsibilities of life. It was a plan to eradicate the vice and corruption existing in English schools at that time. His experiment changed educational methods. He is said to have been a man whose religious idealism made him austere and severely intolerant of lapses in conduct, a man who won respect but who was singularly tactless in dealing with others. This is the impression Sir Cedric Hardwicke gives. Americans will miss the endearing human qualities of "Mr. Chips," the beloved school master in another recent picture of school life, but under the stern exterior of *Dr. Arnold* is glimpsed a gentler side, and Sir Cedric's characterization is noteworthy in apparently recreating an accurate impression of a real man. The boys are excellent. Jimmy Lyndon with his irregular, guileless features is a happy choice for *Tom.* In contrast to the more sophisticated *East,* Freddie Bartholomew, the differences in character and standards and their consequent incompatibility are understandable. Billy Halop again plays the role of a lawless boy, but with an impeccable English accent and Rugby uniform, he gives a very interesting picture of a gentleman's son who has to learn to play the game according to the rules. The physical cruelty of the hazing scenes is pretty strong. Though perhaps within the realm of reality, these scenes might have been subtly suggested rather than pictured in all their brutal phases. The brutality lessens the entertainment value and prevents the film from being acceptable for all ages.

There are sly touches of humor in the picture, and Polly Moran helps greatly in this. The musical score is interesting and two famous 17th century ballads are sung during the school action: "Barbara Allen," when

Tom sings at the dinner table and is pelted with bread during the usual school hazing, and "The Lincolnshire Poacher," by the whole school. These, according to Bruno Usher, noted music critic, have been favorites with English peasantry for generations. The settings and customs and background of Rugby are exceedingly interesting and the skilful direction of Robert Stevenson gives a feeling of authenticity to an unusual picture.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good but brutal in parts **Children, 8 to 12** Not advised

❖

UNTAMED ◇ ◇

Ray Milland, Patricia Morison, Akim Tamiroff, William Frawley, Jane Darwell. Based on the story "Mantrap," by Sinclair Lewis. Screen play by Frederick Hazlitt Brennan and Frank Butler. Direction by George Archainbaud. RKO-Radio.

Partly because the background of the north Canadian country is so beautifully portrayed in Technicolor, with its great forests, wide lakes, towering mountains and raging snowstorms, the rather melodramatic story of the main characters seems less important. The story has a triangle plot of a French Canadian guide and trapper, his young wife, whose high spirits make her the center of gossip in the backwoods as effectively as on Main Street, and the doctor who comes to regain his health and remains to dedicate his life to the service of mankind. An attempt is made to make all three seem equally noble, with the result that one of the contending men must be sacrificed at the end, a far-fetched although spectacular denouement. Akin Tamiroff as the guide outclasses all others in acting; Patricia Morison is effective in a full-blooded part, but Ray Milland is less successful than in sophisticated surroundings.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Unsuitable theme **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

YOU'RE NOT SO TOUGH ◇ ◇

Billy Halop, Huntz Hall, Bernard Punsley, Gabriel, Bobby Jordan, Nan Grey, Rosina Galli, Henry Armetta, Cliff Clark. Original story by Maxwell Aley. Direction by Joe May. Universal.

This tells the story of a gang of migrant, tough boys, living by their wits, who return the kindness of a woman rancher by means of violence and trickery in competition with union produce workers.

The film is singularly daring in giving the impression that California marketing organizations are unfair to ranchers. It also suggests discrimination against foreign born residents, and the solution of the economic problem is through violence on the part of youthful hobos who thus win a false sympathy which they do not deserve. Billy Halop is a versatile actor who is being typed by thoroughly unpleasant roles. The part of *Mama Posito,* played by Rosina Galli, is saccharinely sentimental. It is a picture which presents unhealthy, subversive propaganda, particularly dangerous at this time.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Bad **Children, 8 to 12** No

SHORT SUBJECTS

INFORMATION PLEASE ◇ ◇

Deems Taylor, Guest Expert. RKO-Pathe.

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SEIGE ◇ ◇

Reelisms. RKO-Pathe.

This is a pictorial record of what one newspaper correspondent actually saw in the siege of Warsaw. The realistic brutality it portrays and the commentator's interpretation excite further hatred of Germany's methods. Parents must decide the suitability for individual adolescents. It will undoubtedly inspire a feeling of insecurity in younger children.

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FEATURE FILMS

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Boom Town
The Boys From Syracuse
The Bride Wore Crutches
Captain Caution
Charlie Chan at The Wax Museum
Gold Rush Maisie
The Great McGinty
I Married Adventure
The Lady in Question
The Man I Married
One Crowded Night
Pastor Hall
Pride and Prejudice
Queen of Destiny
The Ramparts We Watch
Sailor's Lady
The Sea Hawk
South of Pago Pago
Stage Coach War
Stage to Chino
Sing, Dance, Plenty Hot
Sporting Blood
They Drive By Night
The Villain Still Pursued Her
We Who Are Young
When The Daltons Rode
Young People

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FEATURE FILMS

BOOM TOWN ◇ ◇

Clark Gable, Spencer Tracy, Claudette Colbert, Hedy Lamarr, Frank Morgan, Lionel Atwill, Chill Wills, Marion Martin, Minna Gombell. Screen play by John Lee Mahin. Based on a story by James Edward Grant. Directed by Jack Conway. Produced by Sam Zimbalist. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

People who enjoy the epic type of film will probably get their money's worth out of "Boom Town." The stampede for oil in Texas and Oklahoma is a good two-fisted American theme, and Clark Gable and Spencer Tracy are a fine pair of hot-headed prospectors, hijacking equipment, making and losing fortunes over night, even taking a fling at bucking big business among the New York oil barons, and always ready either to share their last cent or to black one another's eyes. The scenes of bringing in oil gushers and fighting fire in the oil fields are exciting, and the feverish activity of life in a boom town is convincingly recreated. Combined with the action drama is a story well known to movie goers, of one man's marriage to the other's ideal girl, in which Gable figures as the husband, Claudette Colbert as the wife, and Tracy as the faithful, though jilted admirer who stands by through the years and keeps the marriage from going on the rocks whenever the husband forgets his marriage vows. Hedy Lamarr is cast as a fabulous temptress. The film is overlong and there are times when both dialogue and action seem deliberately to violate good taste.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

THE BOYS FROM SYRACUSE ◇ ◇

Allan Jones, Martha Raye, Joe Penner, Rosemary Lane, Charles Butterworth, Irene Hervey, Alan Mowbray, Eric Blore, Samuel S. Hinds. Based on the stage play written and produced by George Abbott. Screen play by Leonard Spigelgass, Charles Grayson and Paul Gerald Smith. Direction by A. Edward Sutherland. Universal Pictures.

This is a streamlined, boisterous travesty on "Comedy of Errors," acted with spirit and abandon. The twin brothers, unknown to each other, come to Ephesus seeking their lost father, who is under sentence of death there (for failure to pay income tax). The familiar complications arise as, with their twin servants they play hide-and-seek with each other and with the law. In the end their fate is settled by a singing contest, one of several rollicking specialty numbers which punctuate the show. The humor is broad and slapstick and some of the dialogue is in extremely bad taste. Whether the film is clever or just rowdy is a matter of one's point of view.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

THE BRIDE WORE CRUTCHES ◇ ◇

Lynne Roberts, Ted Worth, Edgar Kennedy, Robert Armstrong, Lionel Standers, Grant Mitchell. Original screen play by Ed Verdier and Allan Drady. Direction by Shepard Traube. Twentieth Century-Fox.

Johnny Dixon, a likeable youth fresh out of college, aspires to be a newspaper man. His "expert" bungling of his reporting job gets him into hot water, and his attempt to solve a crime mystery is effective only because of the intelligent aid of a girl co-worker. The title is a clever touch involving his last mishap. It is light, inconsequential entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 All right — **Children, 8 to 12** No value

❖

CAPTAIN CAUTION ◇ ◇

Victor Mature, Louise Platt, Leo Carrillo, Bruce Cabot, Robert Barrat, Vivienne Osborne, El Brendel, Roscoe Ates, Miles Mander. From the novel by Kenneth Roberts. Screen play by Grover Jones. Direction by Richard Wallace. Hal Roach Studios. United Artists.

While this is a robust tale of adventure and romance on the high seas, a story of 1812 with America at war with England, it seems primarily to prove that women on merchant sailing ships bring bad luck. The crews believe the old saying, and certainly shrewish *Corunna Dorman,* the captain's daughter, is a liability. The *Olive Branch* is en route from the Orient to Maine. The news of war with England has not reached the ship, and thus it becomes easy prey to an English warship. During the battle *Captain Dorman* is killed, and *First Mate Marvin* surrenders to the superior force. *Corunna* furiously dubs him *"Captain Caution."* When they are rescued by an American frigate and the ship is returned to *Corunna,* she replaces the First Mate with ex-slaver *Slade* (Bruce Cabot). The plot then is concerned with the fight between the two men for the ship and the girl's affections. It is a long and complicated struggle because of *Corunna's* passionate loves and hates and her lust for revenge. The story is a confused series of battles and brutal fist fights lightened with irrelevant comedy and music. Miss Platt's role is unsympathetic and she plays it coldly. Victor Mature is a dark and serious hero, and Bruce Cabot plays the heavy menace very well. If one is interested in boxing there are a number of exhibitions which are doubtless good, but the unitiated will find them too brutally realistic for enjoyment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Brutal — **Children, 8 to 12** No

CHARLIE CHAN AT THE WAX MUSEUM ◇

Sidney Toler, Sen Yung, C. Henry Gordon, Marc Lawrence, Joan Valerie, Marguerite Chapman, Ted Osborn. Michael Visaroff. Original screen play by John Larkin based on character created by Earl Derr Biggers. Directed by Lynn Shores. Twentieth Century-Fox.

A visit with *Charlie Chan* to the Wax Museum is much like going to a "Fun House" at a beach resort. The plot is devised for thrills, and the confusion of flesh-and-blood characters with wax figures is guaranteed to chill the blood. *Chan* and his son, *Jimmy Chan,* go to the museum to track down a criminal and to clear the name of an innocent man. *Jimmy* manages to blunder into all sorts of ridiculous situations to the amusement of his philosophical parent and of the audience as well. *Chan* proves himself to be an astute detective with great powers of intuition, for the clues are never apparent to the onlookers. The film is intended for amusement and is one of the best of the series, quite satisfactory as a double feature—if double features are ever satisfactory.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Exciting entertainment — **Children, 8 to 12** Not advised for nervous ones

❖

GOLD RUSH MAISIE ◇ ◇

Ann Sothern, Lee Bowman, Slim Summerville, Virginia Weidler, Mary Nash, John F. Hamilton, Scotty Beckett, Irving Bacon, Louis Mason, Victor Kilian, Jr., Wallace Reid, Jr. Based on original story by Wilson Collison. Screen play by Betty Reinhardt and Mary C. McCall, Jr. Direction by Edwin L. Marin. Produced by J. Walter Ruben. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Maisie Ravier spreads her optimistic philosophy and good fellowshinp over more serious problems than usual when she meets a family of "dust-bowlers" en route to stake a gold mine claim in Arizona. With her astonishing facility for solving difficulties, she persuades the anti-social *Bill Anderson* to offer his land in cooperative shares to the destitute "Oakies" and convinces the latter to go gack to the soil rather than to pursue the dubious hope of striking gold. Ann Sothern as *Maisie* carries the picture with her pleasing personality and unquenchable spirits. The plight of the migrants is realistically presented, and the film contains an unmistakable plea for a deeper understanding of their needs, although in the handling of the material, entertainment is more stressed than propaganda.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes — **Children, 8 to 12** Too mature

THE GREAT McGINTY ◇ ◇

Brian Donlevy, Muriel Angelus, Akim Tamiroff, Allyn Joslyn, William Demarest, Louis Jean Heydt, Arthur Hoyt, Steffi Duna. Written and directed by Preston Sturgis. Paramount.

Fortunately Americans are gifted with a sense of humor, and it is a triumph for the democratic principles of free speech that it is possible to burlesque dirty politics in governmental places. For burlesque can point to the need for reform as effectively as other methods of denunciation. This is the story of two men who fail in life because of one weak moment. One, an unright citizen, made one dishonest step and wrecked his life, the other, a dishonest bum, had his weak moment when he decided to change to a creed of decency and honesty and thus forfeited all that he had gained. The two meet in a dive in the South Seas, and at the bar the bum tells how he was once lifted from the gutter through the machinations of crooked politicians to become Governor of a State. In that position of power he decided to live up to the reform platform to which he had pledged himself and the gang defeated him. It is a blasting commentary on the power of men who pull political wires. It is cleverly pictured, and Brian Donlevy and Akim Tamiroff give remarkably effective performances. It is humorous, swift moving, highly entertaining and it certainly punctures the complacency of citizens whose lethargy make political scandals possible.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Needs adult interpretation

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

I MARRIED ADVENTURE ◇ ◇

Osa Johnson Production. Columbia.

This travel film follows the biography of Osa Johnson in which are described the many trips she took in company with her husband into little explored parts of the world in search of photographic records of unusual wild life and native tribes. It begins with their first trip shortly after their marriage, when they chartered a sailing vessel and ventured into the South Seas. This trip ended disastrously with Martin's illness. It then follows through their more elaborately equipped expeditions to their last adventures by means of airplanes. It emphasizes the realities more than some of the other films which the Martins have released, and the hazards and exciting experiences seem more factual. It is very interesting, often amusing, and always entertaining, and it gives a realistic and informative impression of real adventure.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good

Children, 8 to 12 Good

THE LADY IN QUESTION ◇ ◇

Brian Aherne, Rita Hayworth, Glenn Ford, Evelyn Keyes, Irene Rich, Curt Bois, George Coulouris, Sumner Getchell, Nicholas Bela. Story by Marcel Achard. Screen play by Lewis Meltzer. Direction by Charles Vidor. Columbia.

There is a Continental flavor about this delightful picture which may be explained by the fact that it is an adaptation of a French film. It is very different from the usual "boy-meets-girl" Hollywood production, for it is an ingenious and entertaining story of human relations in which interest is centered in the character roles. A middle-aged Frenchman of the shopkeeper class at last has the long anticipated opportunity to serve on a jury. He is very serious about the responsibility and succeeds in getting an acquittal on the case. Then his sympathetic interest in the girl on trial leads him to take her into his home under an assumed name. Essentially an honest man, he finds himself enmeshed in lies which bewilder and embarrass him, and furthermore to his amazement he finds himself holding the same intolerant viewpoint which he had condemned at the trial. Brian Aherne gives a superlative picture of this somewhat pompous kindly man whose bewilderment and emotional confusion are a little sad, but also very funny. The character roles are the outstanding ones: *Andre Morestan* (Brian Aherne), *Henri Lurette* (Curt Bois), one of the jurors who cannot make up his mind about the case; *Nicholas* (Nicholas Bela), a Hungarian taxi driver who adds to the confusion and the merriment; the Fat Boy (Sumner Getchell) with his changing fiancees. Glenn Ford has real charm as *Andre's* son, and Evelyn Keyes is vivacious and amusing as the daughter who is in love with love.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Essentially mature in interest

Children, 8 to 12 Too mature

❖

THE MAN I MARRIED ◇ ◇

Joan Bennett, Francis Lederer, Lloyd Nolan, Anna Sten, Otto Kruger, Maria Ouspenskaya, Ludwig Stossel, Johnny Russell, Lionel Royce, Fredrik Vogeding, Ernest Deutsh. Screen play by Oliver H. P. Garrett. Based on Liberty Magazine story by Oscar Schisgall. Direction by Irving Pachel. Twentieth Century-Fox.

"The Man I Married" is a powerful anti-Nazi film. Its punch lies in the fact that it mirrors the typical American reactions to what is now accepted fact. A year ago the picture might have been considered controversial. The story is of Berlin in 1938 where an American woman is vacationing with her charming German-born husband and their little boy. She is eager in anticipation and open-mindedly confident that what she has heard about Germany and Hitler is simply false newspaper propaganda. But as soon as

her husband steps on German soil he is transformed. He becomes converted to the Nazi state of mind. She watches the transformation with incredulous amazement and is at first lightly amused until a shocked belief arouses her anger and disgust and an American newspaper correspondent opens her eyes to what is actually taking place. Finally she, herself, is caught in the toils of the Gestapo when she innocently goes to the aid of an injured youth. The newspaper man convinces her that there is danger in what she sees about her and that she must leave Germany—at once. Her farewell to her husband, "Heil, Heel," is echoed in American hearts as a fitting salutation to a frenzied idealogy.

It is an arresting picture which should arouse interest both because it is entertaining and because it is unafraid.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Depends upon maturity **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

ONE CROWDED NIGHT ◇ ◇

Billie Seward, William Haade, Anne Revere, Paul Guilfoyle, Emma Dunn, George Watts, Dick Hogan, Gale Storm, Adele Pearce, Don Costello. Screen play by Richard Collins and Arnaud d'Usseau. Story by Ben Holmes. Direction by Irving Reis. R. K. O.

Emma Dunn and George Watts as the parents of *Mae* and *Annie* are operating an auto court far out on the desert to get away from the publicity and shame attendant upon the imprisonment of *Mae's* husband, *Jim,* for participation in a bank robbery. A bus stopping at the retreat leaves a young woman too ill to continue her trip to locate her husband, a sailor in the Navy. She has a baby during the night. Next arrive the sailor A.W.O.L. and two officers sent to retrieve him. Into the scene come *Brother Joseph,* a quack medicine salesman, two crooks who had framed *Mae's* husband, and *Jim,* himself out on parole. An ex-ganster's moll is waitress in the cafe. Finally a brawl starts which is the signal for a free-for-all gun battle, and a melodramatic solution for everyone's troubles. Full of suspense and dire portent, the film manages to hold interest, and the title is a comprehensive indication that there is no lack of action as the plot unfolds.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

PASTOR HALL ◇ ◇

Nova Pilbeam, Sir Seymore Hicks, Wilfred Lawson, Marius Goring, Brian Worth, Percy Walsh, Lina Barrie, Eliot Makeham, Peter Cotes, Edmund Willard, Hav Petrie, Bernard Miles. Based on an unproduced play by the late German dramatist, Ernst Toller. Screen play by Leslie Arliss, Anna Reiner and Haworth Bromley. Produced by John Boulting. Presented by James Roosevelt with a foreword written by Robert E. Sherwood and given by Mrs. Franklin Delano Roosevelt. United Artists.

Mrs. Roosevelt has done a courageous thing in appearing in the prologue of this film, because "Pastor Hall" is the strongest and most serious indictment of the Nazi philosophy ever released in America. The story is based on that of the German martyr priest, Rev. Martin Neimoeller. *Pastor Hall* is introduced as the kindly, middle-aged mentor of a village as yet almost untouched by the National Socialist movement in the early days when Hitler's regime was sweeping Germany. Then come the Storm Troopers. They begin their spying, Jew baiting, property destruction, and challenging of any criticism of the "system." The leader is attracted to the pastor's daughter, and both the girl and her father try to learn from him what the new ideology means and what its hold is on the people. It is this interest of *Fritz Gerte* in *Christine* which saves the pastor temporarily, but his sincerity, his conviction that he must live and speak according to the Truth as he sees it without compromise or subterfuge, finally gets him into the concentration camp from which he escapes only to die heroically. His last message to his people is that while the body may be scourged the spirit cannot be touched, and that eventually in spite of persecution and denial, "The trumpet of God will be heard."

Though it holds absorbing interest, the film cannot be classed as entertainment. It is grim, terrible, appalling.

Wilfred Lawson plays the leading role. He is dynamic in his sincerity—wonderfully convincing. The only other familiar face is that of Nova Philbeam, known to American audiences in "Seven Days a Queen" and other English films. Sir Seymore Hicks is extremely picturesque as a former general of the Imperial Army. This is a film which American audiences will want to see whatever their personal convictions may be about diplomatic appeasements and international relations.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not under 15 **Children, 8 to 12** No

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE ◇ ◇

Greer Garson, Laurence Olivier, Mary Boland, Maureen O'Sullivan, Frieda Inescort, Karen Morley, Edna May Oliver, Ann Rutherford, Edmund Gwenn, Heather Angel, Melville Cooper. Screen play by Aldous Huxley and Jane Murfin, based upon Jane Austen's novel. Musical score, Herbert Stothart. Directed by Robert Z. Leonard. Produced by Hunt Stromberg. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

To preserve the quaint flavor of Jane Austen's precisely written novel and at the same time to produce a lively, entertaining movie is the difficult assignment which has been brilliantly carried out in "Pride and Prejudice." One does not have to be an Austen connoisseur to appreciate the satiric humor of *Mrs. Bennett's* worldy ambitions for her daughters and clumsy attempts to maneuver them into advantageous marriages, nor does the romance of *Elizabeth* and *Mr. Darcy* seem any the less real and touching because the lovers speak a stilted language. As the film progresses one follows the fortunes of the characters with a mixture of sympathy and tolerant amusement as if to say, "How charming you were in your day." The production has an interesting musical setting with such distinct form and rhythm that in some scenes the action almost takes on the quality of a ballet. Every role is well cast, and the costumes and settings are a delight.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Very entertaining

Children, 8 to 12 Probaby beyond them

❖

QUEEN OF DESTINY ◇ ◇

Anna Neagle, Anton Walbrook, C. Aubrey Smith, Walter Rilla, Greta Wegener, Felix Aylmer, Lewis Casson, Charles Carson. Screen play by Charles de Grandcourt, Miles Malleson and Robert Vansittart. Producer-Director, Herbert Wilcox. Technicolor production. Imperator. R. K. O.

"The Queen of Destiny" was produced in England some two years ago and the film was reviewed in *Motion Picture Reviews* in May, 1939, under the title "Sixty Glorious Years." Its release in America was deferred and will only now reach the theatres here. The delay will not be to its disadvantage. It is a magnificent production, and the world confusion today only emphasizes its sympathetic appeal. It faithfully follows the story of Victoria's reign as Queen of England, beginning with her marriage to Albert. It depicts her life with him, his tragic death, saddened because his untiring efforts in the cause of England were always misunderstood, her seclusion after his death, and her re-emergence to round out her life as the Empire's beloved symbol of permanence. The picture is episodic in form, touching lightly on many events of historic importance, but concerned most with the pageantry of those days, and enriched with many human touches and some endearing humor. The authenticity of the exteriors and interiors adds lustre to the production, and color adds immeasurably to the beauty. It is a splendid historical document but it is also a very human one, superbly acted and directed. Anna Neagle is lovely as the young Victoria, charming, wilful, often stubbornly thoughtless and tactless with her ministers and more and more dependent upon the judgment and guidance of her husband. The transition to the aged woman is skilfully accomplished. Anton Walbrook is wonderfully sympathetic in a touching role. C. Aubrey Smith is capable and sincere. Much of the dialogue has a special pertinence today, and the panorama of the sixty glorious years is an emotional experience, for it builds toward an understanding of the tremendous influence of a great queen upon the devoted subjects of a great empire.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent

Children, 8 to 12 Excellent

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THE RAMPARTS WE WATCH ◇ ◇

Cast of 1,400 with 73 speaking parts. Script by Robert L. Richards and Cedric R. Worth. Produced and directed by Louis de Rochemont. Production staff from The March of Time. R. K. O.

"The Ramparts We Watch" is *March of Time's* first feature length film. It is presented in documentary style, a combination of authentic news reels and fabricated scenes. It deals with the lives and behavior and changing trends in thinking of people during a crisis in a democracy. The events which took place in America during the critical war years, 1914-1918. are recreated as authentically as possible and are supplemented by actual pictures concerned with famous personalities of that period. The cast is non-professional. The setting is a small New England town. What happened there found its counterpart in cities and towns all over the country. The title is the same as that of a book written in 1938 by Major Fielding Eliot, but it is not a dramatization of his book. Both are designed, however, to awaken Americans to the necessity of always considering the security of the Republic. As the film progresses, the change in thinking which the American public experienced during those significant years seems strikingly similar to that which is taking place in the public mind today. The implication is dynamic and the significance overwhelming.

The film is a plea for preparedness, and whatever one's personal opinion may be of its message, it is thought provoking and should be seen.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good

Children, 8 to 12 Mature

SAILOR'S LADY ◇ ◇

Joan Davis, Dana Andrews, Mary Nash, Larry Crabbe, Katherine Aldridge, Harry Shannon, Wally Vernon and "Skipper." Screen play by Frederick Hazlitt Brennan from an original story by Frank Wead. Direction by Allan Dwan. Twentieth Century-Fox.

Whatever sense of humor Americans are credited with, is put to a severe test by this rowdy, silly burlesque of Navy men. The sailors are made ridiculous, cheap bullies trying to prevent one of their number from marrying a girl to whom he is engaged. The girl finally pretends they have been married for some time and brings along a baby to enlist officers' sympathy. The child is stowed away on one of the ships and creates a crisis during naval maneuvers.

The film is poor entertainment at any time, but it is in execrable taste today when immediate preparedness is a national objective and high respect for Naval personnel and morale is uppermost in our minds.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
No

Children, 8 to 12
No

❖

THE SEA HAWK ◇ ◇

Errol Flynn, Brenda Marshall, Flora Robson, Claude Rains, Donald Crisp, Alan Hale, Henry Daniell, Una O'Connor, James Stephenson, Gilbert Roland, Montague Love. Screen play by Howard Koch and Seton I. Miller. Adapted from novel by Sabatini. Musical score by Erich Wolfgang Korngold. Direction by Michael Curtiz. Warner Bros.

"The Sea Hawk" is a swashbuckling tale of adventure which is particularly effective in the spectacular scenes of sailing vessels on the high seas. Singularly enough, while it is a story of war and strife, it offers an escape from reality. The battle scenes show the individual prowess of man against man, a far cry from the picture of modern warfare today. There is little attempt at historical accuracy, and one may doubt the actual ethical status of the Sea Hawks, those fighting privateers who pillaged Spanish galleons and excused their piracy by turning over the loot to Elizabeth and England's coffers. The plot justifies their acts because of a secret plan of the Spanish government to build a huge armada for world conquest, and there is a comparison, for those who read between the lines of the appeasement tactics of *Elizabeth* with certain policies of modern England. The fifth column is also paralleled by intrigue within *Elizabeth's* cabinet. But for pure adventure, spectacular action, and pleasing romance, the picture is excellent entertainment. The story interprets the loyalty and courage of *Geoffrey Thorpe* (Errol Flynn), the most dreaded of these privateers, who sinks a Spanish galleon on which the Spanish Ambassador and his niece are en route to England.

The director's handling of ships and masses of men is stunning. There are savage hand-to-hand battles with broad swords, and excellent fencing scenes, although these are perhaps overlong. Errol Flynn is a dashing hero: this type of role his best. Alan Hale, Claude Rains, and Henry Daniell are very good, but the outstanding performance is that of Flora Robson, who is superb as *Queen Elizabeth*. The costuming is gorgeous, and the pomp and splendor of court life is vividly portrayed. The ships are unusually interesting. They are accurate replicas of vessels of the period and in design and detail are worth attention. Had the film been photographed in technicolor the result would have been magnificent.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Excellent of type

Children, 8 to 12
Good but overlong and exciting for those under 10

❖

SOUTH OF PAGO PAGO ◇ ◇

Victor McLaglen, Jon Hall, Frances Farmer, Olymphe Bradna, Gene Lockhart, Douglas Dumbrille. Story and screen play by George Bruce and Kenneth Gamet. Direction by Alfred E. Green and Edward Small (United Artists release).

Exploitation of the natives of a tropical paradise by a particularly diabolical crew of white men in search of fabulously valuable pearls forms the basis for this latest picture of the South Seas. *Bucko Larson* is so depraved that he takes along a girl of the Singapore water-front to beguile, first, the sailor who knows the location of the isle, and second, the son of the chieftain, who must be out of the way when *Bucko* plies the divers with gin to persuade them to descend to depths which cripple and destroy them. It ends with a cataclysmic battle between natives and whites, in which the latter somewhat belatedly, meet their desserts. All in all, it is a man's picture. The best parts are taken by men. The more brutal and sinister and dastardly a character Victor McLaglen is given to portray the better he polishes it off. In deep contrast is Jon Hall who has a naive manner, a dignity, a sense of graciousness and trust which make him wholly convincing as *Kehane,* the chieftain's son. Gene Lockhart and Douglas Dumbrille are good in lesser roles. The part taken by Frances Farmer is so improbable in nature that it does her little credit. Some of the native scenes, especially those of women dancers, seem artificial and utterly stagey. On the other hand there is fine photography of the island heights and the tropical forests, and there are some remarkably fine undersea pictures of the natives diving for pearls.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Too brutal and ruthless

Children, 8 to 12
No indeed

STAGE COACH WAR ◇ ◇

William Boyd, Russell Hayden, Britt Wood, Harvey Stephens, J. Farrel MacDonald, Julie Carter. Screen play by Norman Houston. Based on story by Clarence E. Mulford. Direction by Lesley Selander. Paramount.

Two rival stagecoach owners vie for the Wells Fargo business out of a small Western town. *Hopalong Cassidy* arranges a sensational race between the coaches to settle the question and meanwhile runs down a band of outlaws who have been robbing the stage of gold shipments. This is a typical action film in which the story is more or less incidental. The ethics are on the whole constructive because fairness and good sportsmanship win out and the evil doers meet their just fate. The Western country is beautifully photographed, and the men, especially William Boyd, enact their roles convincingly and with zest. But Julie Carter is hardly an ideal choice for the object of so much romantic attention.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Matter of taste

Children, 8 to 12
Depends on individual. Very exciting

❖

STAGE TO CHINO ◇ ◇

George O'Brien, Virginia Vale, Hobart Cavanaugh, Roy Bancroft, William Haade, Carl Stockdale, Glenn Strange, Harry Cording, and Pals of the Golden West. Screen play by Morton Grant and Arthur V. Jones from story by Norton S. Parker. Direction by Edward Killy. R. K. O.

Two rival stagecoaches again contend for mail contracts and again the noble, handsome hero wins the race for speed, wrecks a plot to cheat the gold miners on the weight of their dust, and gets the girl. It is a typical Western, picturesque in setting, not too realistic in plot, and vigorous in action. It has melodious cowboy tunes sung by the *Pals of The Golden West,* and is on the whole pleasing entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Good of type

Children, 8 to 12
Exciting

❖

SING, DANCE, PLENTY HOT ◇ ◇

Ruth Terry, Johnny Downs, Barbara Allen (Vera Vague), Billy Gilbert, Claire Carleton, Mary Lee, Elizabeth Risdon, Lester Matthews, Leonard Carey. Screen play by Bradford Ropes. Original story by Vera Caspary and Bradford Ropes. Direction by Lew Landers. Republic Pictures.

Here is something light and gay, a combination of comedy, dance, and song. The slight story centers around two aristocratic, eccentric spinsters, *Agatha* and *Susan,* who with their young niece manage an orphans' home. They become involved in a benefit show for the institution, and many of their traditions are thrown overboard before the affair actually comes off and all is well again. Some of the comedy is hilarious, especially where Billy Gilbert is concerned, but there are dull spots, and Barbara Allen sometimes succeeds in passing on her jitters to the audience. Possibly Vera Vague's particular type of St. Vitus Dance comedy is best in smaller doses. Several dance routines, the opening scene, *Johnny* and *Irene* in the park, and a Rhumba are excellent, and the singing orchestra of children is another high light. Johnny Downs shows skill as a dancer and promise as an actor.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Passable, typical musical comedy

Children, 8 to 12
Not especially recommended

❖

SPORTING BLOOD ◇ ◇

Robert Young, Maureen O'Sullivan, Lewis Stone, William Gargan, Lynne Carver. Based on an original story by Grace Norton. Screen play by Lawrence Hazard, Albert Mannheimer, and Dorothy Yost. Direction by S. Sylvon Simon. M-G-M.

Following what seems to be a new cycle of films having to do with horse racing in the South, this picture tells the story of the scion of an old family who returns, after an absence of some years, to his home town and attempts to restore the family fortunes by cashing in on a winning horse. Romance, prejudice, and old South traditions are woven into a highly implausible scenario. The characters and plot are overdrawn and there are some rather distressing scenes. It may entertain audiences who are satisfied with the portrayal of a horse owner's unselfish love and consideration for animals.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Possible

Children, 8 to 12
Not recommended, too emotional

❖

THEY DRIVE BY NIGHT ◇ ◇

George Raft, Ida Lupino, Ann Sheridan, Humphrey Bogart, Gale Page, Alan Hale, Roscoe Karns, John Litel, George Tobias, Henry O'Neil. Screen play by Jerry Wald and Richard Macaulay from a novel by A. I. Bezzerides. Direction by Raoul Walsh. Warner Bros.

The title of this film suggests that it is about the experiences of the hardy men who drive trucks night after night on hazardous trips. It fulfills this expectation for half of the picture, showing the dangers encountered by the drivers, their fatigue and their comaraderie as they meet at wayside eating places. But later it turns into a melodramatic story of a vicious woman's desire for a man who does not love her. As a vehicle for Ida Lupino it is a striking success, for she emerges as an actress of great dramatic ability. Her performance dwarfs those of

other members of the cast, although each is capable. It is not a pleasant story. The frightful accidents on the road are realistic and full of horror. The ugly character of the woman is not edifying, and much of the dialogue is unnecessarily vulgar. The film holds interest because of the acting rather than because of the script.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 Absolutely not

❖

THE VILLAIN STILL PURSUED HER ◇ ◇

Hugh Herbert, Anita Louise, Alan Mobray, Buster Keaton, Joyce Compton, Richard Cromwell, Billy Gilbert, Margaret Hamilton, Diane Fisher. Screen play by Elbert Franklin. Direction by Edward F. Cline. Producer, Harold B. Franklin. R. K. O.

This is a travesty of old time melodrama on the curse of drink, done with all the mannerisms and flowery speeches of the 1850's. The audience is invited to participate in the fun by indicating by applause or hisses its approval or disapproval of the sentiments expressed. The cast is clever and enters into the spirit of the burlesque, and the direction is effective. It is an amusing novelty, but one questions whether it is successful in the cinema medium. The motion picture theatre lacks the intimate atmosphere which makes the audience an integral part of a stage performance such as the long-popular revival of "The Drunkard," for example; and in order to interpret this picture correctly one must see it from the beginning and understand that it is a parody. It may appeal to sophisticated audiences as an innovation, but an unruly house could make the showing torture—without meaning or subtlety.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Possibly if understood

Children, 8 to 12 No

♣

WE WHO ARE YOUNG ◇ ◇

Lana Turner, John Shelton, Gene Lockhart, Grant Mitchell, Henry Armetta. Original screen play by Dalton Trumbo. Direction by Harold S. Bucquet. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

There is a touch of O'Henry at the beginning when the great panorama of New York City is narrowed down to a view of two sparrows on a window sill and of two young people who seem equally insignificant. It is a story which is old and yet eternally new with each boy and girl who marry and face the economic struggle together. Due to a few mild extravagances, a heedless word or two, a margin of error in setting up a budget which does not allow for a possible baby, they reap some very bitter experiences before there is a turn upward. Endurance reaches an end when *William*, who can no longer accept a check for idleness, seizes a shovel from a laborer and fights for the right to work. It is a film which is sometimes tinged with sadness, but it is not defeatist. There are no recriminations, these two face life together, at the worst moments, warm-hearted people lend support, and through it all is the indomitable will to win. The young actors seem very real and appealing, and the supporting cast is good.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Mature

Children, 8 to 12 No interest

❖

WHEN THE DALTONS RODE ◇ ◇

Randolph Scott, Kay Francis, Brian Donlevy, George Bancroft, Broderick Crawford, Stuart Erwin, Andy Devine, Frank Albertson, Mary Gordon. Original screen play by Harold Shumate based on "When the Daltons Rode," by Emmett Dalton and Jack Jungmeyer, Sr. Directed by George Marshall. Universal.

In spite of the fact that it is based on the biography of a well-known family of desperados, there is a gay improbability about this film which allows the spectator to sit back confident that all its exciting action is as unreal and as heroically maneuvered as "The Perils of Pauline." The four Daltons are introduced as honest farmers who take the law into their own hands when a thieving syndicate cheats them of their land and the Court is dishonest. But soon the thrill of successful train robberies and bank hold-ups colors their outlook and there are no tears shed when one by one they bite the dust. Broderick Crawford registers as a definite personality well cast as *Bob Dalton*. Much of the comedy is due to Andy Devine who shows himself entirely qualified for the part of a hard riding, quick shooting, death defying cowboy. Mary Gordon has several emotional scenes as the tiny mother of the four "he-men." Kay Francis and Randolph Scott are quite incidental in a film packed full of roaring action. Certainly it is good of its type. There is no saccharine sentimentality about it. The Daltons have their moments—and meet their just desserts to the entire satisfaction of the audience who have had their money's worth of rip-snorting hokum.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good fun

Children, 8 to 12 Depends on individual—not recommended for excitable children

YOUNG PEOPLE ◇ ◇

Shirley Temple, Jack Oakie, Charlotte Greenwood, Arleen Whelan, George Montgomery, Kathleen Howard, Minor Watson, Frank Swann, Frank Sully, Mae Marsh, Sarah Edwards, Irving Bacon. Screen play by Edwin Blum and Don Ettlinger. Music and lyrics by Mack Gordon and Harry Warren. Musical direction by Alfred Newman. Directed by Allan Dwan. Produced by Harry Joe Brown. Twentieth Century-Fox.

For the first time since Shirley Temple became a star she does not have to carry an entire story on her small shoulders. "Young People" is therefore not a top heavy vehicle for Shirley's talents, but a pleasantly unpretentious comedy in which a trio of seasoned entertainers are featured. Jack Oakie and Charlotte Greenwood as the adopted parents of *Wendy*, long to retire from the vaudeville circuit to make a real home on a New England farm where they believe the little girl will grow up to be a member of a stable society. There is a good deal of hokum but also considerable pathos and humor in the story of how their ambitions work out. The interpolated songs and dances are tuneful and entertaining.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

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FEATURE FILMS

ARGENTINE NIGHTS ◇ ◇

The Ritz Brothers, the Andrews Sisters, Constance Moore, George Reeves, Peggy Moran, Anne Nagel, Kathryn Adams, Ferike Boros, Paul Porcasi. Screen play by Arthur Horman, Ray Golden, Sid Kuller. Direction by Albert Rogell. Universal Pictures..

Three producers of novelty acts are coerced by their creditors but manage to get their girl orchestra and trio of singers on board ship to the Argentine where they have a contract at a new hotel. On arrival they find that the hotel is out in the country, off the road, and bankrupt. But through a ship acquaintance, after some amusing misunderstandings, all goes well—except for the brothers. It is a gay, nonsensical medley of comedy, song and dance, typical of the Ritz Brothers' productions. George Reeves and his South American chorus have the best songs and are the high light. The Andrews Sisters' following may enjoy their contribution.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Matter of taste

Children, 8 to 12
No value—little interest

BRIGHAM YOUNG ◇ ◇

Tyrone Power, Linda Darnell, Dean Jagger, Brian Donlevy, Jane Darwell, John Carradine, Mary Astor, Vincent Price. Based on a story by Louis Bromfield. Screen play by Lamar Trotti. Direction by Henry Hathaway. Produced by Darryl F. Zanuck. 20th Century-Fox.

One of the most important phases of the Western movement in America and one which has not had sufficient consideration in popular literature until the last year or so, is the great migration of the Mormons to the valley of Salt Lake, where they could worship God in the way they deemed fit "outside the borders of the United States." It is difficult for us to believe that they were persecuted in Missouri and Illinois with the savage bigotry of present-day Nazism, but such was the case. The picture begins with scenes of rapine and murder: peaceful adherents of the faith are beaten to death; Joseph Smith is killed by a mob in a prison where he has been placed with a mock show of legality; their thriving town of Navoo is burned to the ground. At this time their

leader, Brigham Young, comes to the front, leads them on the covered-wagon trek across plains and mountains. It is not an easy religion he promises them: they must endure grueling hardships and privations; many must die. There are lesser men, such as Angus Duncan, who try to snatch authority from him and are repeatedly disloyal. He is even beset by doubts of his own strength and leadership. One of the most affecting passages is his description of the journey in his conversing with a God who is very real and human to him. The choice of Dean Jagger for this part is inspired. His voice alone is enough to convey courage and sincerity. It is through his eyes that we see the privations of that first terrible winter near Salt Lake, the heart-breaking assault of myriads of crickets and the miracle of the sea-gulls at the end, which is one of the most beautiful and almost unbelievable spectacles ever produced in motion pictures.

It is a fine cast. Vincent Price is memorable as Joseph Smith. Tyrone Power and Linda Darnell, while not important in historical parts, show the influence of the movement on two humble members of the expedition and add a warm human note. Many of the men's parts are well done. Among the women Jane Darwell and Mary Astor are outstanding, although it is doubtful if the real Mary Ann Young, played by the latter, had any such influence over Brigham. The whole matter of plural marriages has been treated with such extreme tact and delicacy that it is practically dismissed as a vital tenet of the Mormon faith. Undoubtedly it would be impossible to give it factual presentation without lessening the heroic sweep of the picture.

Brigham Young believed in music for relaxation after a hard day's work, for rejoicing in the hour of success, and so it is used here. Photography is of high quality. There is fine treatment of people in masses and of the first buildings of the new community; and the mountain heights with the first views of the promised land are truly magnificent. While it is a long picture, it is so absorbing that one is scarcely conscious of the passing of time.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good
Children, 8 to 12 Too heavy

❖

DANCE GIRL DANCE ◇ ◇

Maureen O'Hara, Louis Hayward, Lucile Ball, Virginia Field, Ralph Bellamy, Maria Ouspenskaya, Katharine Alexander, Walter Abel. Screen play by Tess Slesinger and Frank Davis from the story by Vici Baum. Musical director Edward Ward. Dances staged by Ernst Matray. Direction by Dorothy Arzner. Produced by Erich Pommer. R.K.O.

This is a story of back stage life which achieves novelty by reason of its story, good direction and able casting. It tells of a group of young dancers, of their loyalties and self interests. It is particularly concerned with two of the group who are sharply contrasting types in appearance, in ethical standards, and in achievements. Down on their luck they take jobs in a cheap burlesque, one as stooge for the other. They also compete for the attentions of a man about town. The ending is a nicely planned surprise with a little moral all its own. It is sophisticated, but, excepting one scene, is handled in good taste. The dancing specialties are good of their different types.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too sophisticated
Children, 8 to 12 No, too mature

❖

DR. KILDARE GOES HOME ◇ ◇

Lew Ayres, Lionel Barrymore, Laraine Day, Samuel S. Hinds, Gene Lockhart, Nat Pendelton, Emma Dunn, John Shelton, Alma Kruger, Walter Kingsford, Nell Craig, Cliff Danielson. Screen play by Harry Ruskin and Willis Goldbeck. Directed by Harold S. Bucquet. Musical direction by David Snell. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

All the *Doctor Kildare* pictures have been entertaining, but this one, with a better rounded and less theatrical story than most of the series, is exceptionally good. In it the young doctor has just completed his internship and has received a coveted appointment when he finds that his father's health is breaking under the strain of an arduous county medical practice. At first he decides that it is his duty to forfeit his new position in order to help his father, but in the end he finds another way to solve the problem.

The usual diagnosis of a difficult case from obscure symptoms enters into the plot, but is subordinate to the more pleasing theme of a son's loyalty to his parents and the sacrificial devotion of the physicians to the ideals and responsibilities of their profession.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent
Children, 8 to 12 Little interest

❖

FLOWING GOLD ◇ ◇

John Garfield, Frances Farmer, Pat O'Brien, Raymond Walburn, Cliff Edwards, Tom Kennedy, Granville Bates, Jody Gilbert, Virginia Sale. Original screen play by Kenneth Gamet suggested by a story by Rex Beach. Direction by Alfred E. Green. Warner Bros.

This is another in the cycle of oil field stories but it is scarcely strong enough to stand alone on a program. The plot is said to have been suggested by Rex Beach but evidently only his setting has been retained. It tells the story of *Johnny Blake* (John Garfield) who is wanted by the police for manslaughter. He is given a job by *O'Connor* (Pat O'Brien) when he saves the latter's life from attack by a drunken worker. The two go to Texas to drill for oil. Their experiences are disheartening and then thrilling and include saving a well which has caught fire. In this *Johnny* is the hero and he is

later encouraged to give himself up and stand trial for the accident which put a pall on his good name. The cast is competent but the picture fails to develop stirring qualities, possibly because it is slow in getting into action. The sympathetic role is that of the dependable *O'Connor,* but all the rewards go to *Johnny Blake.* In movies we have been led to expect some form of poetic justice and this failure may explain the disappointment in the film.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable interest

Children, 8 to 12 Too melodramatic

❖

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT ◇ ◇

Joel McCrea, Laraine Day, Herbert Marshall, George Sanders, Albert Basserman, Robert Benchley, Edmund Gwenn, Harry Davenport, Eduardo Ciannelli, Martin Kosleck and a number of character roles. Original screen play by Charles Bennett and Joan Harrison. Dialogue by James Hilton and Robert Benchley. Cinematography by Rudy Mate. Musical score by Alfred Neuman. Direction by Alfred Hitchcock. Walter Wanger Production. United Artists.

"To those intrepid ones who went across the seas to be the eyes and ears of America . . .

"To those forthright ones who early saw the clouds of war while many of us at home were seeing rainbows . . .

"To those clear-headed ones who now stand like recording angles among the dead and dying . . .

"To the Foreign Correspondents . . . this motion picture is dedicated."

—WALTER WANGER.

Mr. Wanger's first plan was to adapt from "Personal History" certain of the incidents and backgrounds of Vincent Sheean's actual experiences abroad, but the swiftly changing events in Europe made the story out of date almost at once and thus an idea suggested by Mr. Hitchcock was elaborated, which carries only the romantic spirit of the original. It is a thrilling and entertaining melodrama of European intrigue telling of the startling experiences of an American reporter who is sent abroad by the managing editor of his paper to find out the real facts about the delicate international situation among countries on the verge of war. *Johnny Jones,* whose name is promptly changed to *Huntley Haverstock* for the assignment, goes especially to interview the Dutch politician *Van Meer* who is said to know more than anyone about the potentialities of actual war. *Jones* has no academic background of economics or diplomacy and no preconceived ideas of what to look for, and he promptly finds himself catapulted into a situation of sinister intrigue which takes him from London to Amsterdam, back to London and then to America via the clipper on the day England declared war on Germany.

The plot should not be divulged because of its surprises which hold the audience entranced. It is devised for fun and excitement, and Alfred Hitchcock's direction is superb. Through the medium of original camera work, interrupted dialogue, and clever characterizations the story sweeps toward a thilling climax. Even the finale, when the reporter, now a full fledged foreign correspondent, pleads over the radio in a blackout for a "prepared America" it does not seem redundant. The plot is sensational but Americans are beginning to awaken to what *Haverstock* uncovered, the fact that war itself is sensational and that the menacing power which civilization faces is not above using any method for its purposes of destruction.

Joel McCrea seems perfectly cast as a normal youth with a newspaper man's sense of "news"; fearless, alert, and competent. Albert Basserman is excellent as the aged politician whose secret knowledge makes him a danger to the enemy. Robert Benchley has an amusing role as the correspondent whose twenty-five years on the job make him more interested in his diet than in analyzing news. George Sands is fine as a keen British journalist, and Herbert Marshall is the leader of a federation for peace and thus an important key figure. Of the many characters listed all are excellent, Edmund Gwenn especially so, as a bodyguard offered to the reporter. Laraine Day plays the romantic interest but, due either to the part as written or to her unemotional interpretation, is not as sympathetic as she might be.

Interesting, picturesque European scenes give a feeling of unusual authenticity and set the mood, and the tense scenes are brilliantly presented. The picture is exceptionally original and entertaining production.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent

Children, 8 to 12 Too tense and mature

✦

THE GOLDEN FLEECING ◇ ◇

Lew Ayers, Rita Johnson, Lloyd Nolan, Virginia Grey, Leon Errol, Nat Pendelton, George Lessey. Screen play by S. J. and Laura Perelman and Marion Parsonnet. Based on original story by Lynn Root, Frank Fenton and John Fante. Direction by Leslie Fenton. Musical score by David Snell. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

The plot of this picture reads like a mathematical brain teaser. A dumb but honest insurance salesman sells a life insurance policy to a man who turns out to be a gangster in momentary danger of being killed. The problem is how can the insurance man protect his company from paying a loss and at the same time deliver the gangster into the hands of the law and make $25,000 for himself? The whole thing is extremely farcical with humor depending on the stupidity

of most of the characters and a number of satirical cracks at the law. Lew Ayers is not at his best in this type of role. Rita Johnson as the romantic interest is very pleasing.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Questionable theme
Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

GOLDEN GLOVES ◇ ◇

Richard Denning, Jean Cagney, J. Carrol Naish, Robert Paige, William Frawley. Based on a story by Maxwell Shane. Screen play by Maxwell Shane and Lewis R. Foster. Paramount.

"Golden Gloves" is the name of a band of amateur boxers, boys who are being exploited by a racketeer until one of their number is killed in a bout. This boy is the brother of the fiancee of a newspaper reporter who dedicates himself to the establishment of clean, healthy sport and develops a fine athletic organization. It is more interesting for those who enjoy and understand boxing but informative for others. While it is chiefly a masculine cast, Jean Cagney adds a note of charm. Unfortunately the boys are shown taking the law into their own hands and beating up the racketeer.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes, especially for boys
Children, 8 to 12 Too mature in treatment

❖

THE GREAT PROFILE ◇ ◇

John Barrymore, Mary Beth Hughes, Gregory Ratoff, John Payne, Anne Baxter, Lionel Atwill, Edward Brophy, Willie Fung. Original screen play by Milton Sperling and Hilary Lynn. Directed by Walter Lang. 20th Century-Fox.

Taking as a basis for the plot John Barrymore's recently much publicized appearances in "My Dear Children," this picture runs the gamut of absurdities. *Evans Garrick* (John Barrymore) returns in high bibulous mood after a three days' absence to find a distracted manager and an irate wife who promptly leaves for Reno. Into the scene comes a naive playwright who succeeds in selling her very bad play to *Garrick* because her fiance will finance the production. It "flops" until the actor adds his own "spirited" touch to the original lines and action. The playwright then becomes his mentor and puts him on a milk diet and again the play is wrecked. But suddenly the wife returns, *Garrick* falls off the wagon and the play revives.

John Barrymore is a great actor, and his artistry is apparent even in this clowning burlesque of himself and his profession. Many of his admirers will be disappointed by his appearance in such a picture, and it certainly has no moral or ethical value. We suspect that Mr. Barrymore is kidding the audience for being amused. It is slapstick with wit injected and it is laughable only because a master actor invites those looking on to laugh with him. Gregory Ratoff plays the frantic manager to the hilt, the girls are adequate but have supreme competition playing against John Barrymore and Gregory Ratoff.

It is a raucous, satirical comedy best suited to audiences who will recognize the Barrymore mannerisms and appreciate the travesty.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No
Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

HAUNTED HONEYMOON ◇ ◇

Robert Montgomery, Constance Cummings, Leslie Banks, Sir Seymore Hicks, Robert Newton, Googie Withers, Frank Pettingell, Joan Kemp-Welch, James Carney, Louise Hampton, Eliot Makeham, Reginald Purdell. Screen play by Monckton Hoffe, Angus MacPhail, Harold Goldman. Based on novel "Busman's Honeymoon" by Dorothy L. Sayers. Direction by Arthur B. Woods. M-G-M.

Dorothy Sayers has written a series of detective stories in which *Lord Peter Wimsey* and *Harriet Vane* always figure. The novels are unusual, and are enjoyed by discriminating readers because the characters seem more real and human than in the average story of this type. But they also depend upon witty dialogue and character study more than on action and for this reason "Haunted Honeymoon" may seem deliberate and slow by comparison with other mystery pictures. In this film, *Lord Peter* and *Harriet* are married and plan a quiet honeymoon. *Harriet* is a writer of detective tales and *Lord Peter* a lawyer whose keen mind and flaire for ferreting out hidden clues are in constant demand by Scotland Yard. But on their honeymoon both swear that nothing can lure them into the publicity into which their hobby of crime detection leads. They retire to a farmhouse in the quiet village of Biddlecombe in Devon but before they are unpacked a baffling murder upsets all their plans.

Interest depends upon English settings, delightfully quaint characters, comedy, clever dialogue, and the human charming roles played so naturally by Miss Cummings and Robert Montgomery. The mystery is unraveled without the violent action usual in pictures of this type. It will prove exceptionally entertaining for many audiences.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes
Children, 8 to 12 Probably little interest

❖

HE STAYED FOR BREAKFAST ◇ ◇

Loretta Young, Melvyn Douglas, Alan Marshall, Eugene Pallette, Una O'Connor, Curt Bois, Leonid Kinsky. Screen play by P. J. Wolfson, Michael Fessier and Ernest Vajda. Adapted from Sidney Howard's version of the French play "Liberti Provisoire" by Michael Duran. Direction by Alexander Hall. Columbia Pictures.

This is a satirical farce which has the same basic idea as "Ninotchka" but which lacks the Lubitsch smoothness and subtlety. Again

the communist, exposed to the luxury of wealth and the lure of the other sex, changes his colors when *Marianne Duval,* the beautiful and expensive wife of a banker, proves to *Paul,* the communist organizer, that there are only *two* classes actually in her experience and that these are "male and female." Adapted from the French play "Liberte Provisoire" it is a sophisticated bedroom farce, daring at times and always sexy. The cast is well chosen: Loretta Young, beautifully gowned, is successful in a comedy role. Melvyn Douglas plays his sardonic role capably, but the ringing speech against his "party" at the end is thoroughly out of place in a vehicle which needs no further emphasis to point a moral. Una O'Connor is very clever, and her intoxication scene is hilarious. Curt Boise, Leonid Kinskey and Eugene Pallette contribute to the amusement. Poking fun at an ideology eschewed by Americans should win approval, but greater finesse in handling the situation would have insured the production wider general appeal.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

THE HOWARDS OF VIRGINIA ◇ ◇

Cary Grant, Martha Scott, Sir Cedric Hardwicke, Alan Marshall, Richard Carlson, Paul Kelly, Irving Bacon, Elisabeth Risdon, Dickie Jones. Screen play by Sidney Buchman. Adapted from "The Tree of Liberty" by Elizabeth Page. Direction by Frank Lloyd. Frank Lloyd Production. Columbia Pictures.

Elizabeth Page's novel, "The Tree of Liberty," is a recreation of an extended and vital period in American history, the birth of the Democracy, told in its effect upon a Virginia family through two generations. This film covers only the first half of the book up to the time when victory for the Colonial Army is apparent in the last year of the Revolutionary War. It is the story of *Mat Howard,* a fiery backwoodsman, fighter for the rights of the settlers against discrimination in favor of the privileged classes. *Howard* marries *Jane Peyton,* an aristocrat with anti-democratic views and a background of luxury and arrogance. This essential difference makes their life together difficult until through their grown son they are brought at last to an understanding of the value of tolerance and the art of compromise in any relationship.

The picture is a fascinating one, thoroughly interesting in content and splendidly cast. Cary Grant plays a serious role in which the comedy is created not by the dialogue, but in the character's relation to the situations involved. As *Mat* he is crude, loud, unadaptable, selfish in his domestic relationships, but idealistic in his political views. Martha Scott is dignified, unemotional and lovely as *Jane,* the aristocratic wife. There is a curious lack of emphasis placed on the emotional bond between the two, but the theme is primarily concerned with a conflict of two ideologies and is treated intellectually, not emotionally.

In the cast Sir Cedric Hardwicke is exceptionally fine as *Jane's* brother *Peyton,* loyal supporter of the Crown and bitter foe of *Mat.* Richard Carlson is an ideal *Jefferson,* Alan Marshall is excellent as young *Howard Peyton,* the youth who leads his parents to understand and fuse their conflicting viewpoints. Frank Lloyd has directed with intelligence and dignity.

The film is particularly worth while today in interpreting again the early days of the founding of democracy and in making history a human document by showing two sincere people trying to adjust their lives to a changing regime.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent

Children, 8 to 12 Good, but mature

❖

HIRED WIFE ◇ ◇

Rosalind Russell, Brian Aherne, Virginia Bruce, Robert Benchley, John Carroll, Hobart Cavanaugh. Screen play by Richard Connell and Gladys Lehman. Based on story by George Beck. Produced and directed by William A. Seiter. Universal Pictures.

Marital scramblings are providing most of the comedy themes in movies these days, and this plot introduces a marriage of convenience which the wife is reluctant to dissolve when the business arrangement is no longer necessary. *Stephen Dexter,* in fighting a cement combine, is threatened with bankruptcy. His shrewd legal advisor decides that he must marry immediately and put everything in the wife's name. They call upon the competent secretary to save the day, which she does, but when the situation requires undoing, her eye is upon a designing advertising model who has attracted *Stephen,* and the hilarity begins, or rather continues, for Mr. Seiter keeps the fun continuous. The farce is smart and sophisticated without being crude. The cast is excellent, and both Miss Russell and Miss Bruce manage to make the girls sympathetic, a difficult achievement in a way for Miss Russell considering the eccentric costumes given her. Can it be she chose them?

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Sophisticated

Children, 8 to 12 Unsuitable

❖

I LOVE YOU AGAIN ◇ ◇

William Powell, Myrna Loy, Frank McHugh, Edmund Lowe, Donald Douglas, Nella Walker. Screen play by Charles Lederer, George Oppenheimer and Harry Kurnitz. Original story by Leon Gordon and Maurine Watkins. Based on novel by Octavus Roy Cohen. Direction by W. S. Van Dyke II. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Following a vogue seemingly popular today, this near-bedroom farce races perilously close to the border line of vulgarity and

sometimes oversteps in dialogue. The story deals with a lapse of memory caused by a head injury and a return to normalcy after another similar accident. The comedy is amusing because of the definite change in personality which the blows cause in the victim. William Powell cleverly portrays the dual role—seen first as a pompous, thoroughly dull but honest "Babbitt," he awakes to his former self, a slick confidence man who recalls nothing of the past nine years and is properly embarrassed by discovering that he is married. The character lacks the debonair wit which made the "Thin Man" a winning sophisticate, and Myrna Loy's role is also less effective than usual and her lines are pointedly broad. The picture is racy and hilarious at times, but disappointing in its off-color humor.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

I'M NOBODY'S SWEETHEART NOW ◇ ◇

Dennis O'Keefe, Constance Moore, Helen Parrish, Lewis Howard, Samuel S. Hinds, Laura Hope Crews, Berton Churchill. Direction by Arthur Lubin. Musical direction by H. J. Salter. Universal.

This is a very light comedy with several new songs and very modern settings, winding up with a beautiful wedding scene. Politics get entangled in Cupid's bow-string, when an ambitious senator who wishes to be governor breaks up two romances and arranges one which will cement his own political ties. That the new combination is more suitable glosses over this unethical procedure. A collegiate touch is added by the fact that two of the rivals are bootball stars. Acting is adequate, and the music good, especially the singing of Constance Moore and the orchestral accompaniment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 No interest

❖

MEN AGAINST THE SKY ◇ ◇

Richard Dix, Kent Taylor, Edmund Lowe, Wendy Barrie. Story by John Twist. Screen play by Nathaniel West. Direction by Leslie Goodwins. R.K.O.-Radio.

With aviation holding the spot-light at the present time a picture dealing with the construction of a new, high-speed plane is timely, although there are few original ideas in this film. *Phil Mercedes* is a famous flyer who has learned to rely on drink until it cuts short his career and he is deprived of his pilot's license. Due to the encouragement of his sister he braces up long enough to make important contributions to the design of a new super-plane and performs his most spectacular feat by saving it from crashing on the day it is tested. Although Richard Dix is thus the hero he receives less footage than Edmund Lowe, philandering owner of the factory, Kent Taylor, the chief engineer, or the pretty sister, Wendy Barrie, who all make things hum around the shops. Testing of the planes is thrilling but repeated too many times, and now and then it is evident that models are being used. While the picture is fast enough to keep the audience's interest, it is not one that will be remembered long.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 For boys because of the mechanical interest

Children, 8 to 12 Too mature

❖

LUCKY PARTNERS ◇ ◇

Ronald Colman, Ginger Rogers, Jack Carson, Spring Byington, Cecilia Loftus, Harry Davenport, Hugh O'Connell, Lucile Gleason. Screen play by Allan Scott and John van Druten. Based on the story "Bonne Chance" by Sacha Guitry. Direction by Lewis Milestone. R.K.O.-Radio Pictures.

"Lucky Partners" is an intermittently amusing farce comedy in which laughs come frequently enough to keep one hoping that the film will eventually develop into something really good. Perhaps the original story by Sacha Guitry had some French seasoning without which a *potage du jour* is recognizable as yesterday's left overs. At any rate the film is disappointing. The plot is the old one about a platonic experiment that turns into romance. Ronald Coleman and Ginger Rogers will please their already converted admirers, although Miss Roger's hair-do and hats are most unflattering. Henry Davenport again takes the spotlight with his impersonation of a judge in an absurd courtroom scene.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Because of farcical treatment probably harmless though sophisticated in theme

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

MYSTERY SEA RAIDER ◇ ◇

Carole Landis, Henry Wilcoxon, Onslow Stevens. Based on a story by Robert Grant. Screen play by Edward E. Paramore, Jr. Direction by Edward Dmytryk. Paramount.

This is the story of an American ship the owner of which, *Jimmey Madden,* contracts with a *Mr. Cutler,* presumably an American businessman, to carry on his shipping business in the Carribean area. When, once on the high seas, *Mr. Cutler* reveals himself and his workers aboard, as agents of the Nazi government, whose purpose is to raid enemy cargoes, the refusal by *Madden* and his crew to work for the Nazi cause results in their imprisonment aboard ship. The rest of the picture concerns itself with torpedo warfare and the plans of *Madden's* sweetheart, a rather privileged captive aboard, to inform the proper U. S. authorities of the location and activities of the mystery ship. The picture is a succession of highly improbable situations, unconvincingly portrayed in scenes of most mediocre acting, without the slight-

est semblance of reality. The only redeeming features of the film are some excellent shots of submarine and torpedo activity.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No value **Children, 8 to 12** No value

❖

NO TIME FOR COMEDY ◇ ◇

James Stewart, Rosalind Russell, Genevieve Tobin, Charlie Ruggles, Allyn Joslyn, Clarence Kolb, Louise Beavers, J. M. Kerrigan. Screen play by Julius J. and Philip G. Epstein. From the stage play by S. N. Behrman. Direction by William Keighley. Warner Brothers.

This film version of "No Time for Comedy" uses an ingenious and amusing prologue as a sort of shoehorn to slip Jimmie Stewart into a misfit role. It starts off with *Gaylord Esterbrook,* an extremely green young country playwright, arriving at the rehearsal of his own comedy which is soon to be produced on Broadway. His naivete puzzles and distresses his backer and most of the cast, but endears him to the leading lady to such an extent that she marries him. Up to this point the role seems built to specifications for Jimmie Stewart's particular kind of characterization. But when *Gay* begins to spend most of his time in bars and turkish baths, and falls into the clutches of a silly woman, Mr. Stewart ceases to be the best choice for the role. The situation develops into an undeclared war between the wife and the siren, and it is not hard to guess who will win. Nevertheless the film is excellent light entertainment because in spite of weak spots, it has clever dialogue and many laugh-getting situations. Rosalind Russell gives a nice performance as the almost too perfect wife.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Sophisticated, but handled in good taste **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

PIER 13 ◇ ◇

Lynn Bari, Lloyd Nolan, Joan Valerie, Douglas Fowley. Based on a story by Barry Connors and Philip Klein. Screen play by Stanley Rauh and Clark Andrews. Direction by Eugene Forde. 20th Century-Fox.

There are many laughs and some good characterizations in this story of a cop who rises to become a detective and eventually gets a large reward for capturing a jewel thief. He also wins the girl of his heart. The humorous sallies between Lloyd Nolan and Lynn Bari evoke many laughs, and Oscar O'Shea is splendid as the happy old skipper who knows every boat in the harbor by its whistle. Most of the action is localized around the water front in New York City, and while it is not an ambitious picture in any way, it has its good points.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Not suitable

PUBLIC DEB. NO. 1 ◇ ◇

George Murphy, Brenda Joyce, Elsa Maxwell, Mischa Auer, Charlie Ruggles, Ralph Bellamy, Maxie Rosenbloom, Berton Churchill, Franklin Pangborn, Hobart Cavanaugh, Ivan Lebedeff. Screen play by Karl Tunberg and Darrell Ware. Based on story by Karl Tunberg and Don Ettlinger. Direction by Gregory Ratoff. Musical direction by Alfred Newman. 20th Century-Fox.

From the title and the inclusion of Elsa Maxwell's name in the credits, this picture might be expected to reveal the inside story of New York society. Surprisingly it turns out to be a slapstick comedy about a feather brained soup heiress with communistic sympathies who is saved for capitalism by the Petrucian tactics of a college-bred waiter. It has entertaining moments but a feeble plot and little sustained interest. Brenda Joyce's role is too exaggerated to be pleasing and the humor is typified by such episodes as the heroine's being publicly spanked by a waiter in a cafe. George Murphy is convincing in the role of shrew tamer and the supporting cast is adequate.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

THE RETURN OF FRANK JAMES ◇ ◇

Henry Fonda, Gene Tierney, Jackie Cooper, Henry Hull, John Carradine. Original screen play by Sam Hellman. Direction by Fritz Lang. 20th Century-Fox.

"The Return of Frank James" carries on from the point where "Jesse James" left off. It tells the story of Frank's vengeance upon the Fords, erstwhile pals of Jesse, who murdered the latter by shooting him in the back. Frank, having retired from banditry, is living on a farm with his young friend, *Clem,* when he hears that the Fords have been given a free pardon, and he sets forth to kill them himself. Stealing money from the express office to finance his manhunt, he is implicated in a murder. How finally the Ford brothers are killed and *Frank* risks his own neck to save an innocent man, makes the plot of the film. The action runs true to the formula for westerns with daredevil riding, shooting, and wild pursuits through rugged country. In spite of beautiful Technicolor and a blood and thunder theme, the picture is often rather slow and uninteresting. The most lively moments are at the trial of *Frank* when his freedom is bought by clowning and specious arguments, and by playing upon the then almost universal hatred of railroad officials, all of which would be more amusing if one could forget that the hero was in reality a dangerous public enemy, and that although he was eventually pardoned, he was actually a notorious outlaw.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No. Ethically bad **Children, 8 to 12** No

RHYTHM ON THE RIVER ◇ ◇

Bing Crosby, Mary Martin, Basil Rathbone, Oscar Levant, Lillian Cornell, Charley Grapewin, John Trotter, Ken Carpenter. Screen play by Dwight Taylor. Based on a story by Billy Wilder and Jaques Ther. Direction by Victor Schertzinger. Musical direction by Victor Young. Paramount.

This is one of the best, if not the best, of Bing Crosby's recent releases. The story is slight but entertaining and the director has given it a sparkle and a spontaneity which are infectious. Bing Crosby never seems to be acting, and Oscar Levant steals many scenes with his natural manner and audaciously clever lines, many of which we suspect were his own (ad lib). Ken Carpenter has an amusing scene as an announcer who has to fill in a few minutes of extra time before his performers are ready to go on the air. Story: A song writer without high ambition (except to earn enough money to get a new boat) becomes a ghost writer for a composer who has gone stale. However, romance changes his ideas, and when he tries to break way and sell his own things he is accused of plagiarizing the very songs he wrote for the other man. His oath of secrecy makes his position desperate until a final episode offers both him and the girl the opportunity they deserve.

The songs are tuneful and Oscar Levant plays several times in his inimitable fashion. Mary Martin puts over one song with all the personality and cleverness which we connect with her success in this line.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

❖

SLIGHTLY TEMPTED ◇ ◇

Hugh Herbert, Peggy Moran, Johnny Downs, Elisabeth Risdon, George E. Stone. Story by Max Marcin and Manuek Seff. Screen play by Arthur Horman. Direction by Lew Landers. Universal.

Even in an out and out comedy it is bad practice for an individual to swindle innocent people to finance a potential son-in-law in a laudable enterprise. *Professor Ross* returns from prison determined to go straight, but when the young man of his daughter's choosing needs capital for a factory he finds it just too easy to become a confidence man again. There is little to counterbalance the bad ethics, for all in all this is a pretty silly film with Hugh Herbert "whoo-whoo"ing ad nauseum; he is funny enough in sort sequences but cannot carry a full length picture, if this is a fair example. Peggy Moran, who photographs beautifully, is a redeeming feature, and Johnny Downs is also on the credit side. However, talent is wasted on such a poor story.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

STRANGER ON THE THIRD FLOOR ◇ ◇

Peter Lorre, John McGuire, Margaret Tallichet, Charles Cook, Jr. Direction by Boris Ingster. Story and screen play by Frank Partos. R.K.O.-Radio.

This is a rather gloomy and fantastic yarn with a portion of the conversation *sotto voce* to represent a train of thought and a horrific nightmare which later comes partially true. When a young newspaper man receives a raise in salary for his part in the conviction of a youth accused of murder, the intuition of his fiancee raises doubts in his mind, especially when he finds himself in a parallel situation. It is the girl who has sufficient courage and determination to trace the murderer responsible for both crimes. John McGuire and Margaret Tallichet are well cast as the young couple, and Peter Lorre adds another weird characterization to his repertoire, but aside from their work and some good realism in depicting the seamy side of life, the film adds little to the merit of current productions.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** Frightening

❖

WILDCAT BUS ◇ ◇

Fay Wray, Charles Lang, Paul Guilfoyle, Don Costello. Story and screen play by Lou Lusty. Direction by Frank Woodruff. R.K.O.-Radio.

Racketeers, under the guidance of a vindictive old woman whose dishonest husband has landed in the penitentiary, endeavor to destory an old, established bus line. They are well on the way to success when a young spendthrift and his erstwhile chauffeur are hired by the illegal operators and the bus company respectively. The manager of the bus lines is the president's daughter, an efficient and attractive lass, who enlists the help of the two youths to defeat her enemies. This is a slightly different cross-section of racketeering, but the film has little to set it apart from a dozen others. A certain amount of suspense, dashes of humor, and passable acting, add up to a total of "fair" in the entertainment column.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Little to recommend **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

SHORT SUBJECTS

MARCH OF TIME NO. 10 ◇ ◇

The Philippines 1896-1940.

The March of Times are distinctive because of their high grade of photography and a fine reportorial quality in selecting the points of greatest interest to an audience on any subject covered. This number on the Philippines is no exception, giving as it does a brief history of the people and its relation to the United States, followed by in-

formative pictures pertaining to health, commerce, industries, education and political life. There is more forcible anti-Japanese sentiment at the beginning than Time permits on the pages of its magazine.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Interesting **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

❖

THE CHOIR BOY ◇ ◇

Robert Mitchell and his Boy Choir. (Dedicated to the choir boys of America.) Producer-Director, Irving Applebaum. Narrator, Hugh Brundage.

This is a very interesting account of the work Robert Mitchell is doing with boys of many racial origins. Members of his Boy Scout troup are also trained by him for singing in a church choir. They are well schooled, and it is a joy to hear their fresh young voices as they march up the aisle to their places in the choir.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Very good **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

❖

NORWAY ◇ ◇

First of a series of war graphs from Studios Cartoon Films Ltd. Directed by Paul Fennel. Produced by Lawson Haris. Narrator, Thomas Freebairn Smith. Military Advisor: Capt. Louis M. Hitchcock, U. S. A., Retired.

An illustration of the German invasion of Norway, done entirely by cartoons and graphs and described by Thomas Freebairn Smith, constitutes a new type of film. It shows clearly where the British and French entered the country and why they were unable to combat the Nazis. Very interesting and instructive.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Too tense

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CORRECTION

In the September issue of MOTION PICTURE REVIEWS, credit was erroneously given Alan Marshall for the role of *Peyton Howard* in the review of "The Howards of Virginia." It was, in fact, an achievement of Phil Taylor.

FEATURE FILMS

ANGELS OVER BROADWAY ◇ ◇

Douglas Fairbanks, Rita Hayworth, Thomas Mitchell, John Qualen, George Watts, Ralph Theodore. Written, produced and directed by Ben Hecht. Columbia.

It has been said that if one man performed several offices in connection with a picture it would have greater unity. Certainly it is true that this film, written, directed, and produced by Ben Hecht, is a well-rounded drama with a high degree of individuality. "Angels Over Broadway" is much closer to the stage in technique than the usual cinema feature, and one finds oneself sitting on the edge of one's seat to catch every word that is said, for the repartee is quick and keen-edged. It is an odd sort of play, one of those hypothetical affairs: if Mr. X is about to commit suicide because he owes three thousand dollars, what can anyone do about it? *Gene Gibbons,* a playwright who has won the Pulitzer prize and topped it off with three failures, writes two endings to the plot and one of them proves successful. There are no expensive sets; the action takes place on rainy streets in New York, a fair to medium night club, the stage of an empty theatre, the room of an unsavory hotel. The cast is unusually good; Thomas Mitchell as the playwright, mellowed by liquor and vicissitudes of life; John Qualen, the small businessman preordained for misfortune; Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., a man who lives by his wits and hates to do anything unless he gets his "cut"; and the girl, Rita Hayworth, whose sordid surroundings have not availed to rob her of a fresh viewpoint and the belief that there is some goodness left in humanity. If anyone likes the film, and some will like it very much indeed, it can be credited to these actors and to a certain quality which is indubitably Ben Hecht.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too mature **Children, 8 to 12** Impossible

❖

CHRISTMAS IN JULY ◇ ◇

Dick Powell, Ellen Drew, Raymond Walburn, Alexander Carr, William Demarest, Ernest Truex. Written and directed by Preston Sturges. Musical direction by Sigmund Krumgold. Paramount.

Novelty and spontaniety characterize this

human little comedy in which Mr. Sturges again demonstrates that a simple story may be made unusually satisfying. By logical motivation, well-written dialogue, and the clear definition of even the smallest roles, he magnifies interest beyond what one might expect in so unpretentious a picture. The plot concerns the attempt of a young office clerk to win $25,000 in a slogan contest in order that he may marry his sweetheart, buy his mother a few comforts, and settle down in a real home. The film, though not particularly dramatic, touches the emotions in a range from gaiety to sadness. It satirizes advertising contests and methods of exploitation, makes subtle fun of business executives, and pictures the delicate psychological balance which marks the difference between a man's inner conviction of success and his acceptance of failure. It is unusually pleasing entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent

Children, 8 to 12 Perhaps interesting

❖

CITY FOR CONQUEST ◇ ◇

James Cagney, Ann Sheridan, Frank Craven, Donald Crisp, Frank McHugh, Arthur Kennedy, George Tobias, Jerome Cowan, Elia Kazan, Anthony Quinn, Blanche Yurka. Screen play by John Wexley from the novel by Aben Kandel. Direction by Anatole Litvak. Warner Bros.-First National.

New York, the city for conquest, is a place of opportunity for a few youngsters from the East Side who have varying talents: the girl whose twinkling toes drive her to heavy sacrifice in order to see her name in glittering lights on Broadway; *Danny,* the boy who tries to make his mark in the prizefight ring; the smart kid who begins with petty theft and graduates into the big-time gangster; the smooth, slick contest dancer who offers the girl her chance; and *Danny's* younger brother who, with *Danny's* help, perfects his music and translates his impression of the city into a beautiful symphony. Almost everything is in one picture and something to interest divergent tastes. There is the emotional story of two people in love who do not understand each other's philosophies, there are exciting scenes of prize fights and unsportsmanlike methods (which unfortunately go unpunished and leave a distinctly bad impression); and also brilliant symphonic music performed by the talented youth who alone reaches the high pinnacle of his ambition.

It is well acted. Jimmy Cagney plays a sympathetic role of an unambitious, generous, unembittered youth who faces undeserved tragedy with courage and fortitude. Ann Sheridan is excellent, playing with deep sincerity a part which might easily have been entirely unsympathetic except for the impression she creates of a girl driven solely by a desire for self expression. Others in the cast, especially Arthur Kennedy and Anthony Quinn, carry on competently, and the director keeps a swiftly moving pace. The prize fight scenes are brutually cruel, and some will find the suspense too sensational for pleasure. But the story is unusual and well worked out, and Frank Craven, in a role reminiscent of the Commentator in "Our Town" ties the events together in a philosophical interpretation of the idealism, beauty and heart-break to be found in the whirlpool of a great city.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No—tense and emotional

Children, 8 to 12 No—unsuitable

❖

A DISPATCH FROM REUTER'S ◇ ◇

Edward G. Robinson, Edna Best, Eddie Albert, Albert Basserman, Gene Lockhart, Otto Kruger, Nigel Bruce, Montagu Love, Dickie Moore. From a story by Valentine Williams and Wolfgang Wilhelm. Screen play by Milton Krims. Music by Max Steiner. Direction by William Dieterle. Warner Bros.

It is a gain for the public that so fine an actor as Edward G. Robinson may be seen in biographies based on historical characters in place of the sinister gangster roles for which he was long acclaimed. As in "Dr. Erlich" we have a man who was simple and unaffected in everyday habits, and who achieved greatness because his whole life was bound up in an ideal of service. Julius Reuter believed that in speeding news he was aiding progress, spreading knowledge and truth. The story begins in 1833, but the first event of importance takes place a few years later in the quaint little village of Aachen, where he has established a carrier pigeon post to connect with the new telegraphic system terminating in Brussels. The first commercial use of this service is to bring stock market reports to bankers, but as the telegraph spreads over his territory, he conceives the idea of a news service utilizing the telegraph. His first great success comes in transmitting a speech of Louis Napoleon word for word, the greatest crisis of his career when he announces the assassination of Lincoln so soon after the event that few believe it authentic. At the end is a fervent plea for freedom of the press.

There is a distinct old-world flavor to the picture with a charming old-fashioned romance. Edna Best is lovely as the doctor's daughter who becomes Reuter's wife, and the story gains substance and warmth because of the friends played by Albert Basserman, Nigel Bruce, Montagu Love and Eddie Albert. Gene Lockhart is adept as a crafty banker. Anton Grot's art direction and Max Steiner's music add to the æsthetic value.

It seems at times as if there are too many obstacles to overcome, that moods of de-

pression come more often than success. The story of an agency like Reuter's which has lasted over a hundred years should end with a greater paean of achievement.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent

Children, 8 to 12 Long. Might be tiring.

❖

DOWN ARGENTINE WAY ◇ ◇

Don Ameche, Betty Grable, Carmen Miranda, Charlotte Greenwood, J. Carrol Naish, Henry Stephenson, Katherine Aldridge, Leonid Kinskey, Chris-Pin Martin, Charles Judels, Nicholas Brothers, Thomas and Catherine Dowling, Six Hits and a Miss, Carmen Miranda Band. Screen play by Darrell Ware and Karl Tunberg. Story by Rian James and Ralph Spence. Directed by Irving Cummings. Twentieth Century-Fox.

The fascinating rhythms of Latin American music compose the score of this film, and the mood is set at the beginning when Carmen Miranda opens the picture with *South American Way*. Her magnetic personality is an intangible asset which accounts for her instant popularity in this country in the entertainment field. Not beautiful, but gorgeously costumed, she makes her songs a highlight of the film. The Nicholas Brothers perform a dance specialty which is tops in acrobatic tap. The plot is unimportant because it simply holds together the musical numbers. It is reminiscent of all race horse stories, but set in the Argentine and photographed in technicolor, its atmospheric novelty makes it interesting. Don Ameche gives a good impression of a South American and is a personable hero. Much of the fun is due to Charlote Greenwood who is always counted on, and her songs and dance are inimitable. Leonid Kinsky also gives highly comic support. Chris-Pin Martin, J. Carrol Naish, and Henry Stephenson are excellent. Betty Grable is a pretty little blond but in contrast to the dynamic Carmen Miranda she seems like an ordinary night club entertainer. For its appeal to the eye, its musical score, specialty acts and colorful background, "Down Argentine Way" will undoubtedly be received with enthusiasm.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 If interested

❖

DULCY ◇ ◇

Ann Sothern, Ian Hunter, Roland Young, Reginald Gardiner, Billie Burke, Lynne Carver. Screen play by Albert Mannheimer, Jerome Chodorov and Joseph A. Fields. Based on a play by George S. Kaufman and Marc Connelly. Directed by S. Sylvan Simon. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

The feather-brained, well-intentioned and interfering young lady of the long popular comedy is here again in a new screen version, blundering her way hilariously through one absurd contretemps after another in her mistaken enthusiasm to arrange the personal affairs of relatives and friends. The current film version takes much of the action out of the drawingroom, adds speed boats whizzing crazily on a mountain lake, a barbeque in a thunderstorm, and other laugh getting situations besides several new and colorful characters. If the action lags occasionally, there is still plenty of fun and excitement to make the picture entertaining. Though most of the well-selected cast have had better roles, all are given some opportunity for excellent comedy. Ann Sothern cleverly assumes a character which is quite different from the type of role she usually plays. The film is a good antidote for wartime doldrums.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good

Children, 8 to 12 Probably enjoyable

❖

THE GAY CABALLERO ◇ ◇

Cesar Romero, Sheila Ryan, Robert Sterling, Chris-Pin Martin, Janet Beecher, Edmund MacDonald, Jacqueline Daly, Montague Shaw, Hooper Atchley. Screen play by Albert Duffy and John Larkin. Original story by Walter Bullock and Albert Duffy based on Cisco Kid character created by O. Henry. Direction by Otto Brower. Twentieth Century-Fox.

The *Cisco Kid* (a modern *Robin Hood*) and his faithful Mexican companion help a maiden (and her father) in distress and prevent them from being cheated out of a ranch they have purchased from a woman who cannot bear to have her holdings divided. Janet Beecher plays this somewhat complicated character extremely well covering evil with overtones of charm and dignity, which makes the role menacing in the extreme. The film has action, and excitement and an interesting and beautiful western background. It will interest all but sophisticated audiences, and the ethics are clearly enough defined to entertain youngsters.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 Yes

❖

I'M STILL ALIVE ◇ ◇

Kent Taylor, Linda Hayes, Howard da Silva, Ralph Morgan, Don Dillaway, Clay Clement, Fred Noblo. Story and screen play by Edmund North. Direction by Irving Reis. R. K. O.

Hollywood's daring stunt players are dramatized in this picture. They are the men and women who double for movie stars in hazardous sequences and are thus unrecognized heroes. In this direct and entertaining story *Steve* is one of the more successful in his profession, but his romance with a leading lady and her demanding love present a major dramatic conflict. Kent Taylor is very convincing and attractive in his role as is Howard da Silva, also, as his dependable and loyal friend. Linda Hayes is deft in picturing varying moods from temperamental

shrew to distracted wife determined that her husband must give up his dangerous work. Ralph Morgan is always dependable. Fred Niblo and Clay Clement are seen as directors on the sets. Stunt crashes give exciting thrills, and nicely balanced humor, pathos, and drama contribute to give the picture more than average interest.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Questionable because of drinking

Children, 8 to 12 Mature and exciting

❖

I WANT A DIVORCE ◇ ◇

Joan Blondell, Dick Powell, Gloria Dickson, Frank Fay, Jessie Ralph, Harry Davenport, Conrad Nagel, Mickey Kuhn, Louise Beavers. Screen play by Frank Butler from a story by Adela Rogers St. John. Direction by Ralph Murphy. Paramount.

Instead of using divorce as a pleasant joke or as a means of uniting two stars at the end of a triangle drama, Hollywood has treated the subject seriously and sincerely in this story of a young couple who love each other but find themselves drifting apart because of a difference of opinion about the way in which their livelihood is to be obtained. The husband, a lawyer, finds easy money in handling divorces. His wife, seeing the unhappiness it has caused her sister, disapproves. Tragedy awakens the man to the fact that his contribution to living will bring more lasting satisfaction through practicing in the Court of Reconciliation.

Humor is nicely employed to relieve the dramatic situations, and the two popular leads bring real sincerity to their performances. The picture entertains and at the same time carries a sympathetic message which should not be overlooked.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not under 15

Children, 8 to 12 Not advised. Contributes to insecurity

❖

LADDIE ◇ ◇

Tim Holt, Virginia Gilmore, Joan Carroll, Spring Byington, Robert Barrat, Miles Mander, Esther Dale, Sammy McKim, Rand Brooks, Peter Cushing, Martha O'Driscoll. Screen play by Bert Granet and Jerry Cady from novel by Gene Stratton Porter. Direction by Jack Hively. R. K. O.

This is a "sweet" and sentimental love story which seems to belong to a past era. Gene Stratton Porter's novels usually have a problem of revenge or pride to be settled before the lovers are united, and in "Laddie" an unhappy Englishman has come to America to forget that his son has disgraced the family name. His bitterness and class-consciousness lead him to prohibit his daughter from accepting the friendly kindness of the neighbors and of course hinder the love affair with a farmer's handsome son. *Little Sister* brings fun into the picture with her pranks and precocious ways and finally helps to bring about a happy ending. It is a pleasant, unexciting little picture quite in character with the book. Joan Carroll is a natural little actress and Rand Brooks as *Peter*, a bashful suitor, is really clever. The cast is well selected.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Sentimental

Children, 8 to 12 If interested

❖

LAND OF LIBERTY ◇ ◇

(Reviewed in "Motion Picture Reviews," July, 1939.)

Sponsored by Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Incorporated. Edited by Cecil B. deMille, assisted by Herbert L. Moulton, William H. Pine and Francis S. Harmon. Narration written by Jeanie MacPherson and Jesse Lasky, Jr. Historical Consultant: James T. Shotwell.

"Land of Liberty," the Motion Picture Industry's film is an ambitious, extremely interesting, and novel production in which hundreds of sequences depicting events in the history of the United States have been taken from motion pictures and news reels and skilfully combined to give a stirring panorama of major events in the development of our country. Also as was its intention, it conveys a startling realization of the enormous field of motion pictures. The project was in the hands of the master craftsman, Mr. Cecil B. DeMille. It is suitable in content for all audiences, but its great length would make it tiring for young children.

❖

THE LEATHER PUSHERS ◇ ◇

Richard Arlen, Andy Devine, Astrid Allwyn, Douglas Fowley. Direction by John Rawlins. Universal.

This is one of the poorer pictures of the "B" class, relying on slap-stick and the impact of human bodies in the fight arena for its chief appeal. A young newspaper woman wins the managing contract of an up-and-coming pugilist in a raffle and conceives the idea of making money through his matches to support her home for battered, ageing fighters. Most of the boxing contests are crooked in one respect or another. The film vacillates between farce and heroic drama with the amazing spectacle of a man who has just given a pint of his blood for a transfusion battling through a number of rounds to win a championship match, while the half-dying recipient of his red corpuscles directs the blows by remote control.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Bad sportsmanship

Children, 8 to 12 No

MARGIE ◇ ◇

Tom Brown, Nan Grey, Mischa Auer, Edgar Kennedy, Allen Jenkins, Eddie Quillan, Wally Vernon, Joy Hodges, Richard Lane, Pauline Haddon, Effie Parnell. Screen play by Erna Lazarus, W. Scott Darling and Paul Gerard Smith. Directors Otis Garrett and Paul Gerard Smith. Universal.

This light musical comedy makes no pretense at being anything but a B class film, but as a matter of fact it actually has more laughs in it than many more publicized A pictures. Mischa Auer is seen in a comical role of a South American promoter of the banana industry. (Incidentally he loathes the fruit.) He is in search of a radio program and is attracted to *Margie* who has one ready to sell. The plot is concerned with her efforts to keep his attention on the program, to sell it to the radio producer, and to hold on to her piano in spite of a persistent collection agency. The plot is slight but it is sufficient to give the able comics opportunity to present their hilarious clowning. Andy Devine has a tag line which climaxes the nonsense.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Amusing

Children, 8 to 12 Yes

❖

MELODY AND MOONLIGHT ◇ ◇

Johnny Downs, Vera Vague, Jerry Colonna, Jane Frazee, Mary Lee, Frank Jenks. From an original story by David Silverstein. Screen play by Bradford Ropes. Directed by Joseph Santley. Republic Pictures.

"Melody and Moonlight" is one of the less significant variations of the formula of "boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy gets girl." When the story is concerned with the more juvenile members of the cast, it is innocuous enough. Not as much can be said for the lines given the more adult players. Vulgar innuendos, followed by smirks which leave no doubt as to their meaning could have been deleted without seriously damaging an already negligible plot. Also the frequency with which the noble poor in the movies compare their sterling virtues with the base characteristics of the unworthy rich is becoming tiresome.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Negligible

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

MYSTERY SEA RAIDER ◇ ◇

Carole Landis, Henry Wilcoxon, Onslow Stevens. Based on a story by Robert Grant. Screen play by Edward E. Paramore, Jr. Direction by Edward Dmytryk. Paramount.

This is the story of an American ship whose owner, *Jimmy Madden,* played by Henry Wilcoxon, contracts with a *Mr. Cutler,* presumably an American businessman to carry on his shipping business in the Carribean area. When, once on the high seas, *Mr. Cutler* reveals himself and his workers aboard as agents of the Nazi government, whose purpose is to raid enemy cargoes, the refusal by *Madden* and his crew to work for the Nazi cause results in their imprisonment aboard ship. The rest of the picture concerns itself with torpedo warfare and the plans of *Madden's* sweetheart, a rather privileged captive aboard, to inform the proper U. S. authorities of the location and activities of the mystery ship. The picture is a succession of highly improbable situations unconvincingly portrayed. The only redeeming features are some excellent shots of submarine and torpedo activity.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No value

Children, 8 to 12 No value

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RANGERS OF FORTUNE ◇ ◇

Fred MacMurray, Albert Dekker, Gilbert Roland, Patricia Morison, Joseph Schildkraut, Dick Foran, Betty Brewer, Arthur Allen, Bernard Nedell, Brandon Tynan, Minor Watson, Rosa Turich. Original screen play by Frank Butler. Direction by Sam Wood. Paramount.

Much depends upon the mood in which one sees this film. It is a happy-go-lucky, burlesque melodrama in which three soldiers of fortune cheat death and happen upon weird and exciting adventure in a desert town in Texas in the '70s. In helping a small girl whose courage in defying their high-handed methods has intrigued them, they return with a dying man to the town where he has been fighting a mysterious force which is devastating the countryside. When the newspaper publisher dies they help the child and an old printer continue his paper, and the plot waxes wild and exciting, with all the stunts of a serial. The *Rangers* are a gay and individualized trio. Fred MacMurray is a handsome ne'er-do-well; Albert Dekker, a dumb "pug" whose prowess gets them out of many a fix; and Gilbert Roland is as charming a Mexican cutthroat as one could wish for. Joseph Schildkraut is an excellent "heavy." Little Betty Brewer is an unusual find, a child with unique charm and real ability.

It was produced with tongue in cheek, and it is amusing, but the plot is involved and strives too hard for its effects.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Depends on taste and ability to evaluate.

Children, 8 to 12 No—shocking sequences.

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SKY MURDER ◇ ◇

Walter Pidgeon, Donald Meek, Karen Verne, Edward Ashley, Joyce Compton, Tom Conway. Original screen play by William R. Lipman. Directed by George Seitz. M-G-M.

Nick Carter is out to uncover Fifth Column activities but he seems to be more interested in a vain young girl than in his job as G-man. The character is absurd; the story is incoherent, and the activities of the villains too obscure for the audience to get.

An attempt is made to cover up plot deficiencies by bombings, shootings, screeching brakes and murders in the sky, but the result is a sad jumble.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No interest **Children, 8 to 12** No

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SPRING PARADE ◇ ◇

Deanna Durbin, Robert Cummings, Mischa Auer, Henry Stephenson, S. Z. Sakall, Butch and Buddy, Walter Catlett, Anne Gwynne, Peggy Moran, Franklin Pangborn, Ed Gargan, Wade Botler, Samuel S. Hinds. Original story by Ernst Marischka. Screen play by Bruce Manning and Felix Jackson. Music by Robert Stoltz and lyrics by Gus Kahn. Musical director Charles Previn. Dances by Larry Ceballos. Direction by Henry Koster. Produced by Joseph Pasternak. Universal Pictures.

"Spring Parade" is an exquisite picture, an operetta combining charming romance, lighthearted humor and lilting song. The story is set in Imperial Vienna, radiant city of the past, to which a young peasant girl from the country repairs and has a fortune teller's unbelievable prophesy come true—each prediction, one by one. There is very little suspense, for the plot is outlined when *Ilonka* buys her fortune at the Fair, but the originality of the incidents and the richly unique characterizations more than compensate in their absorbing interest. There is a lovely rhythm to the production. It seems to follow the pattern of the *Blue Danube Waltz* which forms the background music, and it stirs a nostalgic memory of a period and way of living which we shall never see again. Idyllic country scenes, the glory of Imperial pomp and ceremony—these Joseph Pasternak and Henry Koster have evoked with a magic touch. A subtle maturity permeates Miss Durbin's girlish performance. Her songs are lovely in composition and in lyrics. They are integrated into the action and display the increasing beauty of her voice. Other performers are perfectly cast. S. Z. Sakall is disarmingly ingenuous in the role of a kindly fat, little baker whose saltsticks are in favor with the Emperor. Robert Cummings is excellent as the soldier drummer who fails to conform to rules because his heart is in composing. Henry Stephenson brings warmth and charm to his impersonation of *Franz Joseph,* Mischa Auer's bit scene is unforgettable. The production is glowing proof that entertainment wthiout sophistication still offers supreme appeal.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent **Children, 8 to 12** Excellent

STRIKE UP THE BAND ◇ ◇

Mickey Rooney, Judy Garland, Paul Whiteman, June Preisser, William Tracy, Larry Munn, Margaret Early, Ann Schoemaker, Francis Pierlot, Virginia Brissac, Elliott Carpenter, Phil Silvers, George Lessey, Enid Bennet, Harlan Briggs. Screen play by John Monks, Jr., and Fred Finklehoffe. Direction by Busby Berkeley. M-G-M.

This is a first class musical, reminiscent of "Babes in Arms" in theme but elaborated into more spectacular sequences and running over two hours in length. Because the film is exceptionally entertaining and the cast delightfully young and competent, it may seem picayunish to criticize what will undoubtedly be a "smash hit." But perhaps judicious shortening would have made the picture even better entertainment. The La Conga number is skilfully performed with youthful exuberance. In fact, the young people enter into the dance so zestfully that it becomes practically a professional jitterbug exhibition. The burlesque of old-time melodrama also is well done and emphasizes the versatility of the cast, but again it would have been more effective if shortened. After these minor criticisms let us applaud: first, the plot which stresses loyalty and good sportsmanship and is concerned with a group of high school boys and girls who organize a band, overcome handicaps in getting to an audition with Paul Whiteman and win the contest; next, the tuneful score, the attractive, happy cast and the skilful direction which blends humor, sentiment and gaiety for our amusement. Also, orchids for the imaginative and original scene where an orchestra is assembled in symbolic fruit.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Especially the 'teen age **Children, 8 to 12** Less interest

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THREE MEN FROM TEXAS ◇ ◇

William Boyd, Russell Hayden, Andy Clyde, Thornton Edwards, Esther Estrella. Direction by Lesley Selander. Paramount. (A Harry Sherman Production.)

Those who have been following the *Hopalong Cassidy* series will find that this one slips below par. It relies far more on violence and less on clever twists of plot and originality of characterizations than others of the group. One whole batch of horse thieves bite the dust or land behind the bars before *Cassidy* follows his pal *Lucky* to California and finds him in a hornets' nest of trouble, trying to right the wrongs of the Spanish settlers who are being cheated out of their ranchos by desperadoes of the worst stripe. *Hopalong* and Co. bring justice. As usual mountain and desert views are well taken. Andy Clyde as old *California,* whose bragging exceeds his prowess, is a welcome

addition to the cast, and the Mexican father and daughter, played by Thornton Edwards and Esther Estrella, are colorful examples of old-time Californians.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Fair **Children, 8 to 12** Too violent

❖

THE WESTERNER ◇ ◇

Gary Cooper, Walter Brennan, Doris Davenport, Fred Stone, Forrest Tucker, Paul Hurst, Chill Wills, Lilian Bond, Lucien Littlefield. Screen play by Jo Swerling and Niven Busch from an original story by Stuart N. Lake. Direction by William Wyler. Samuel Goldwyn production. United Artists.

This is no epic tale of Texas but rather an excellent portrait of a lawless judge who, in the early days, ruthlessly encouraged the cattlemen in their outrages against homesteaders. Gary Cooper comes into the scene as a stranger en route West, who is suspected of being a horse thief. By outwitting the *Judge* he manages to clear himself and he then reluctantly becomes the champion of the harrassed families. There is little action. Interest is sustained chiefly by the pungent dialogue and by the character study of the eccentric and disreputable *Judge* (superbly played by Walter Brennan), whose sentimental admiration for the actress Lily Langtry contributes to his undoing. The Western country is wonderfully photographed, and a spectacular prairie fire is realistically pictured. Fred Stone and Doris Davenport have leading roles and play them well. Gary Cooper is also very good but his part is overshadowed by the colorful *Judge*. The film will be remembered as a clever picture of a man who had no scruples and who yet was capable of sentiment and grudging admiration for a strong opponent.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

WYOMING ◇ ◇

Wallace Beery, Leo Carrillo, Ann Rutherford, Lee Bowman, Joseph Calleia, Bobs Watson, Paul Kelly, Henry Travers, Marjorie Main. Screen play by Jack Jevne and Hugo Butler from an original story by Jack Jevne. Direction by Richard Thorpe. M-G-M.

Wallace Berry has established a formula, and the character he plays does not vary in interpretation. It is usually the sentimental, dirty, unscrupulous roustabout whose underlying good qualities always come out in the end. In "Wyoming" he is a "bad man" who, in escaping the law, is befriended by a Confederate soldier en route home from the war to his motherless children on a ranch in Wyoming. *Reb* repays the kindness by robbing him and leaving him unarmed so that the Good Samaritan is killed by cattle thieves. A sluggish conscience causes *Reb* to take up the cudgels for the orphans, and in repaying the debt of honor his own innate decency develops.

This is a beautifully photographed Western. The role Wallace Berry plays is not subtle but it manages to have a sympathetic flavor which goes well with the fictional plot. Bobs Watson again displays his ability to emote entertainingly. Marjory Main creates an encentric character which is an excellent foil for Berry's. There is a great deal of dialogue which is not important to the plot but in the end action gets its full opportunity with an Indian raid, soldiers to the rescue, and all the embellishments of a real frontier thriller.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Fair **Children, 8 to 12** No value

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YESTERDAY'S HEROES ◇ ◇

Jean Rogers, Robert Sterling, Ted North, Katherine Aldrige, Russell Gleason, Richard Lane, Edmund MacDonald, George Irving, Emma Dunn, Pierre Watkin, Harry Hayden, Isabel Randolph. Screen play by Irving Cummings, Jr., and William Conselman, Jr., from a Saturday Evening Post serial by William Brent. Direction by Herbert Leeds. Produced by Sol. M. Wurtzel. 20th-Century-Fox.

This football story is unique in that it does not climax with a school boy hero winning the "big Game," but rather, pictures a player who in looking back over his football years realizes that they have been a real handicap. The story of these years is told in cut-backs as the young man looks over a scrap book and recalls the events of his athletic career. The members of the cast are young and attractive: they are fresh and natural and good college types. The settings are not stereotyped and the dialogue is good, but the story is hardly flattering to college athletic competition. Football candidates are given remuneration in overpaid jobs: an alumnus finances a successful team in order to secure a contract for the new stadium: grades are deliberately lowered to keep the star playing on the team though the high grades to which he was entitled would have permitted him to enter the medical school: another player has to be disqualified when it is discovered that he has lied about previous years at another school. It is not a pretty picture, for our hero finds that when an injury keeps him from playing, he is no longer important to the school. His sacrifices for the game mean nothing, his career is handicapped, and disillusionment follows. In true movie style there is also an unfortunate marriage to be annulled, and it takes much encouragement on the part of loyal friends to rehabilitate the youth. The ending is an anticlimax because not sufficient footage is given to motivate it clearly. The theme is an interesting and novel one which, in different ways, has a counterpart in real life, for

athletic stars out of college frequently discover that their brief hour in the limelight with all its glittering illusiveness, is not always the best preparation for meeting life's real problems.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Over 15 **Children, 8 to 12** Too mature

SHORT SUBJECTS

MARCH OF TIME No. 13 ◇ ◇

Gateways to Panama

Some numbers of this series such as the description of the Vatican have been pictorial masterpieces. While this one is not in that class at all, it contains some fine views of the Caribbean, including the Panama Canal, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Trinidad, French Guiana and the Bahamas, with a cursory nod at the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. Probably one-third of the footage is devoted to Devil's Island in a manner guaranteed to send chills down one's spine: while interesting in an unpleasant way, it throws the film out of balance.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Probably all right **Children, 8 to 12** No

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PONY EXPRESS DAYS ◇ ◇

Warner Brothers

The story of the Pony Express and Buffalo Bill's part in its development is told in beautiful Technicolor. The climax comes in the ride through hostile Indian territory to spread the news that Lincoln has been elected, thus saving California from seceding from the Union. Accurate in historical background, it is a film of action with valiant men and swift-footed horses overcoming the hardships of the frontier.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good **Children, 8 to 12** Good

YOUNG AMERICA FLIES ◇ ◇

Warner Brothers

Work of the Civil Aeronautic Authority is demonstrated by a group of young flyers in the setting of Stanford University. Various details of ground instruction as well as first lessons in the air, first solo flights and cross-county assignments are demonstrated with emphasis on safety. The youth who indulges in recklessness and disobedience finds himself permanently grounded.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good **Children, 8 to 12** If interested in details of aviation

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The following films were shown too late to be reviewed in full for this issue. Full reviews to appear in November issue Motion Picture Reviews:

KNUTE ROCKNE—ALL AMERICAN ◇ ◇

Warner Bros.

Inspirational and exceptionally worthwhile for everybody.

❖

MEXICAN SPITFIRE OUT WEST ◇ ◇

R.K.O. Mature family.

Hilarious nonsense.

❖

TOO MANY GIRLS ◇ ◇

R.K.O. Mature family.

Rollicking musical comedy.

❖

THE QUARTERBACK ◇ ◇

Paramount. Mature family.

College football romance.

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NOVEMBER
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SHORT SUBJECTS

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A LINE OF DEFENSE

LAURA OSMAN VRUWINK

Home defense is a national issue today, one to which loyal Americans in factories, in fields, in army training camps, on battle ships, and in the air corps will rally with the united enthusiasm which our nation has always demonstrated in times of danger. Women again, as in the first Great War, will add their services, some in specialized lines of work and others within the home in the conservation of foods, the budgeting of money, in volunteer Red Cross service and self sacrifice. But there is another less spectacular, less tangible line of defense of major importance which is open to women and to which we must give whole-hearted, vigilant attention if our young people are to respect the democracy we favor and if they are to believe that the ideals we cherish are worth fighting for.

Three great tools of communication are the press, the radio, and motion pictures. We all appreciate that much we get from them is trivial, sensational and worthless. When teachers in the early grades of school request fourth and fifth grade pupils to bring in current events as a part of their work, how many mothers have shuddered when a child has eagerly scanned the head lines to find a topic? War abroad (a topic for a time prohibited because our country was a neutral), domestic scandals, murders, political debacles; and hidden in inconspicuous paragraphs the few constructive items which were worth a child's attention. This has made us conscious of what is considered "News." As for the radio, it has certainly furthered the fact that Americans are probably the best informed people in the world today on national and international events. Distinguished commentators clarify the news and sift the false from the factual. The best in music is available on many programs on certain days. But, on the other hand, have you ever tuned in the radio on the week days and heard, during the succeeding hours, the trivial, cheap, stories of domestic strife and unhappy wives, Little Orphan Annie or gunmen wailing or shooting their way to a melodramatic climax? And not the least, but possibly the most important of these tools is the motion picture. At the present time it is claimed that 70,000 men, women and

children attend the movies weekly. In the past when a check has been made it has shown that the larger proportion of the audiences were composed of children and young people under twenty-one, those individuals who are still in the formative stage of emotional development, whose experience in life is insufficient to help them evaluate the social significance of what they see unfold upon the screen. The movies, through their spokesmen, claim to have no social responsibility. They strive only to provide "entertainment." But "entertainment is an important part of rich living." If it is worth anything—it is worth remembering. If a picture is worth seeing once, why not again? How many pictures do you search out to see again?

It is true that in the past few years the technical progress of motion pictures has amazed and delighted us. The screen has, in a number of instances, achieved a maturity of approach in dealing with subject matter. But when critics have applauded an instance and hoped that at last motion pictures had passed out of childhood, a plethora of poor films has appeared which because of inept production or deliberate descent to vulgarity has discouraged those who hoped for sustained progress. The industry claims that it has within its own organization a form of regulation which does not allow vicious subject matter to be filmed. But the public knows that this internal censorship was forced upon it by aroused public opinion. And those who see many of the current releases appreciate the fact that a gradual letting down of the enforced vigilance is taking place. The code is being violated in spirit and in actual form. In the guise of comedy bed room farce is rampant, bar room vulgarity in dialogue is common, and a general lowering of ideals is being countenanced as "entertainment."

It is not because of little children alone that we should care. Intelligent parents are aware of the fact that motion pictures are produced for adult consumption. Even "Snow White" was not made for the nursery age but to appeal to lovers of fantasy whose chronological age was unimportant. Nor do we want all pictures to have a so-called "message." A charming musical comedy such as "Spring Parade," a well constructed, stirring melodrama—"Foreign Correspondent," a clever escapist farce as "The Ghost Breakers," leaves us rich in happy memories and are in their way as important as "The Howards of Virginia" with its deeper significance. "The Great Dictator" is a devastating satire ending with a fervent plea for humanity. But it is not for this alone that it will be remembered, but for the audacious fun, the artistry of a genius who dares us to laugh at a terrorizing force which may explode as effectively as a balloon if it can be recognized and thwarted by those who will strive with all their might to replace wrong with right.

But the majority of current releases are not worth remembering. Some few recreate the stirring days of frontier life and it is claimed here that the "last frontier" has been reached. This should not be so. The stories of individual bravery, courage, faith in this country are innumerable and should provide film material for years to come. More of these stories would give us greater appreciation of why America is worth saving today. The problem which confronts us now is the picture of modern times presented continually on the screen, the over-emphasis of gangster films, the sophisticated distortion of marital relations, the general picture that happiness is dependent upon wealth alone, or upon the winning of a football game. The few series of family pictures in middle class settings are disappearing despite their popularity and those which still remain include night club scenes and extravagant luxuries to increase their "glamour."

When Mary Pickford was the idol of our generation, her roles were consistent. Now what adolescent can worship a star or follow his or her pictures regularly? The cast is no longer an indication of the type of film. Are young people able to separate the roles actors play on the screen from the trivial and sometimes unfortunate publicity they see written about them? What effect has hero worship on the attitudes of youth? How are standards of social behavior tempered by their constant preversion on the screen?

Today we find a patriotic fervor emphasized in films. America is no longer neutral

in thought and there is no reason why current events may not be dramatized in spite of the emotional reactions they create. But *we should know what these reactions are.* It is not impossible to imagine that a different trend could creep into the entertainment field. Some films have already pictured American conditions in a way which has created bitter controversy. No one objects to controversy. We still have no dictator telling us what we shall or shall not see. As long as we have controversy let us thank God. But parents should know what is being shown so that honest, clarifying discussion is possible. And if new idealogies should tinge our entertainment—as is always possible—we should be ready to recognize them. It may be a political ideology foreign to democracy, or it may be social, or an increased ridicule of the standards of behavior which we uphold. In any event no parent has the right to ignore motion pictures and the part they play for we must remember that *we are the consumers.* Our day by day choice determines what we get. If we admire the trivial or the demoralizing we will get just that. If we use discrimination in our patronage we will get more of the superior films because we are the consumers. We are the masters. Our patronage is a vote for what we see.

France fell because its people questioned the value of its form of government. Some of our young people in colleges are even now questioning whether they are willing to defend ours. Have we been too soft, too lenient, too casual about a way of life which we thought needed no defense? As women we must decide. We must evaluate this great and important tool which so far has not been used vigorously enough in promoting the high ideals of our democracy. We must have standards as consumers. Wake up America. Here is another line of defense.

FEATURE FILMS

ARISE MY LOVE ◇ ◇

Claudette Colbert, Ray Milland, Dennis O'Keefe, Walter Abel, Dick Purcell, George Zucco, Frank Puglia, Esther Dale, Paul Leyssac, Ann Codee. Screen play by Charles Brackett and Billy Wilder from an original story by Benjamin Glazer and John S. Toldy. Musical score by Victor Young. Photography by Charles Lang, Jr., A. S. C. Direction by Mitchell Leisen. Paramount.

This is a sophisticated melodrama skilfully blending comedy, romance, and topical events with the War in Europe as a background. Claudette Colbert as a newspaper correspondent on the scent of a good story, poses as the wife of a soldier of fortune, an American flier who is condemned to death for fighting against Franco. She succeeds in getting his release, but when he discovers that her interest in him is only as he furnishes her with copy, his vanity is offended and there follows a romantic interlude which has many comic aspects. Together they shirk their obligations, and when at last interest in each other becomes serious they decide to stop looking for adventure and go back home. But as country after country falls into the hands of the invader, when Paris itself falls, when they themselves are caught on the torpedoed *Athenia* and they see at first hand the human misery of innocent sufferers, they cast aside their shallow masks and turn to do their bit for humanity.

It is well written and well acted. The roles played by Miss Colbert and Mr. Milland are distinctly suited to their personalities and Walter Abel has a splendid opportunity in the part of an harassed chief of a news bureau. Mitchel Leisen deserves credit for fine direction. The title is derived from the Song of Solomon, Chapter 2, Verse 13, "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away," and is the motivation of the plot. It is a very entertaining and stirring tale, especially interesting because of its timely setting and because it deftly avoids sentimentality.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Yes: emphasizes right values.

Children, 8 to 12
No, too mature.

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CHEROKEE STRIP ◇ ◇

Richard Dix, Victor Jory, Florence Rice, William Henry. Story by Bernard McConville. Screen play by Norman Houston. Direction by Lesley Selander. Paramount. (A Harry Sherman Production.)

This is one of the better Westerns. Although the tempo is a little slow at times, the film takes up an interesting episode of the frontier, boasts fine outdoor photography, good riding, satisfactory acting and telling bits of humor which serve to high-light the characters and the story. Richard Dix makes a good hero as the U. S. marshal who comes out to the West in 1890 at the time of the census to help open up the Cherokee Strip

in Oklahoma Territory for colonization. A feud of long standing, which has been the motive for a good deal of bloodshed, is finally settled by legal methods as the march of civilization moves Westward.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes. **Children, 8 to 12** Yes unless easily excited.

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DANCING ON A DIME ◇ ◇

Robert Paige, Grace McDonald, Peter Hayes, Eddie Quillan, William Frawley, Lillian Cornell. Based on a story by Jean Lustig and Max Kolpe. Screen play by Maurice Rapf, Anne Morrison Chapin and Allen Rivkin. Direction by Joseph Santley. Paramount.

When Joseph Santley was connected with a stage musical comedy, one expected something light and fresh and snappy, and one was never disappointed. It is a far cry from those comedies to this picture which has certain clever ideas and passages but simply does not click. Outside of William Frawley's the acting is amateurish, and much of the dialogue sounds ad lib. The plot concerns a band of actors who camp on the stage after a federal theatre project has closed until, by their ingenuity and a few shifty business methods, they emerge from the doldrums to achieve a smash hit. Most entertaining feature is the masked dance in this show within a show, entitled "Public Debutante Number One," costumed and produced in the best Santley manner.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Little interest. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

❖

DIAMOND FRONTIER ◇ ◇

Victor McLaglen, John Loder, Anne Nagel, Philip Dorn, Cecil Kellaway, Francis Ford, Sigfried Arno. Direction by Harold Schuster. Universal.

This is based on the Monte Cristo theme: a man is sent away to prison through the perfidy of enemies, escapes, finds a cache of diamonds and returns to wreak vengeance upon those who have tried to ruin his life. The scene of the story is South Africa in 1870, and the villains are the rough men of the diamond mines. Victor McLaglen is always successful in the part of a vicious law-breaker, but he is not allotted many big scenes, and John Loder's characterization of the upright *Charles Clayton* sometimes shows weakness. Sigfried Arno is excellent in a minor part. There are interesting, if occasionally horrible, shots of the wild life of the jungle including a battle to the death between a leopard and a python. While the film contains one thrill after another, the continuity is poor, and the final impression is much like that of an old time serial.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No. **Children, 8 to 12** Frightening.

ESCAPE ◇ ◇

Norma Shearer, Robert Taylor, Conrad Veidt, Nazimova, Felix Bressart, Albert Basserman, Philip Dorn, Bonita Granville, Edgar Barrier, Elsa Basserman, Blanche Yurka, Lisa Golm. Screen play by Arch Oboler and Marguerite Roberts. Based on the novel "Escape," by Ethel Vance. Direction by Mervyn LeRoy. Metro-Goldwin-Mayer.

This film is a faithful adaption of a thrilling book. The story in its general outlines parallels others that have been written in the last few years, but it is nevertheless absorbing in its interest. A woman mysteriously disappears from a small village in Bavaria. Her son comes from America to discover why his letters to her have been returned. At first he is unable to get any information from the fear-dominated town's people, but eventually he receives ingenious help. Even knowing the outcome, most audiences will be held spellbound by the atmosphere of terror and suspense and sinister mystery that permeates almost every scene of the picture. Robert Taylor as the young American often seems annoyingly lacking in perceptiveness, and more subtlety might well have been used in depicting some of the situations, but on the whole the production is most successful in maintaining its high quality. Norma Shearer is a charming *Countess* whose beauty and graciousness make a pleasant contrast to the sombre intensity of other characters. The film is well cast. Albert Basserman, Conrad Veidt, Felix Bressart, and Mme. Nazimove all give their usual excellent performances. Philip Dorn as the young German doctor is outstanding.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Interesting. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

❖

GIRLS UNDER 21 ◇ ◇

Bruce Cabot, Rochelle Hudson, Paul Kelly, Tina Thayer, Roberta Smith, Lois Verner. Story and screen play by Jay Dratler and Fayna Foss. Direction by Max Nosseck. Columbia.

The girls in this story are the female equivalent of the *Dead End Kids* and seem even more accomplished in anti-social proclivities. Inspired by the beautiful wardrobe of one of their number who has linked her fortunes with those of a gangster, they decide that shop-lifting is a suitable method for obtaining their desires. In the course of time they are caught by the police but are given another chance through the intervention of a young professor who believes in the honor system. Dialogue is crude and often oversteps the bounds of decency, and while the direction is good and the acting spirited, such emphasis is placed on the excitement of law-breaking that one has very little faith in the reform of these hard little delinquents.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Undermining. **Children, 8 to 12** Impossible.

THE GREAT DICTATOR ◇ ◇

Charles Chaplin, Jack Oakie, Reginald Gardiner, Henry Daniell, Billy Gilbert, Grace Hayle, Carter de Haven, Paulette Goddard, Maurice Moscovich, Emma Dunne, Bernard Gorcey, Paul Weigel, Chester Conklin, Hank Mann. Musical director, Meredith Willson. Photography, Karl Struss. Written and directed by Charles Chaplin. United Artists.

Since ridicule is universally recognized as one of the most potent weapons against tyranny, it may be considered as a flattering testimonial of faith in Mr. Chaplin that the rest of the motion picture industry stepped aside and left the field of ridicule to him, while they blasted the enemy with shafts of impassioned bitterness. That their faith was justified is proven beyond a doubt in "The Great Dictator." Chaplin with his unerring ability to discover the frailties and absurdities of human beings scores direct hit after direct hit on the childish vanity and pomposity of the self-appointed dictators. The film is not entirely humorous however, for it carries a theme of deep pathos in the plight of the Jews, typified by the little Jewish barber who has suffered from amnesia and does not at first realize why his people are driven from their Ghetto. As this little barber, Chaplin is his familiar screen self. In his other role of *Hynkle,* Dictator of *Tomania,* he might well be the barber gone suddenly insane and having delusions of grandeur. If there are moments when interest flags and there is a seeming lack of unity, it is probably because there is very little plot and not much suspense. But no one who has seen the film will forget its many delicious absurdities, its masterly irony, its inimitable pantomime, the scenes when *Hynkle* dances with the world and when the barber shaves a customer to the measures of an Hungarian dance. The supporting cast is uniformly excellent. Possibly critics will be unanimous in feeling that the closing speech detracts from the artistry of the rest of the film, but Mr. Chaplin is to be admired for his sincerity and his earnest desire to add still another plea for the preservation of Democratic ideals.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent. **Children, 8 to 12** Not under 10.

❖

HIT PARADE OF 1941 ◇ ◇

Kenny Baker, Frances Langford, Hugh Herbert, Mary Boland, Ann Miller, Patsy Kelly, Phil Silvers, Sterling Holloway, Donald MacBride, Franklin Panghorn, Six Hits and a Miss, Borrah Minevitch and His Harmonica Rascals. Original screen play by Bradford Ropes, F. Hugh Herbert and Maurice Leo. Musical director, Cy Feuer. Dance director, Danny Dare. Direction by John H. Auer. Republic Pictures.

With tuneful numbers, superb tap dancing by Ann Miller, and rollicking comedy, "The Hit Parade" is an entertaining musical, although it lacks smoothness in its presentation. The scene is a radio station in New York where the owners are in difficulties because the station is not equipped for television and the public interest is centered in the new experiment. A rattle brained owner of an antique shop makes a trade for the station and the fun begins after a wealthy sponsor agrees to finance the programs if her daughter is allowed to sing. When Hugh Herbert is found to be the business man and Mary Boland the wealthy matron, the stage is set for anything to happen and it does. When Patsy Kelly also adds her bit at the controls, the debacle is complete. Kenny Baker and Frances Langford provide the romatic interest and sing ingratiatingly. Ann Miller's artistry is delightful. The humor, the hit songs and the elaborate dance finale make up for any lack of polish and provide good entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes. **Children, 8 to 12** A matter of taste.

❖

HULLABALOO ◇ ◇

Frank Morgan, Virginia Grey, Dan Dailey, Jr., Billie Burke, Donald Meek, Reginald Owen, Charles Holland, Leni Lynn, Virginia O'Brien. Based on an idea by Bradford Ropes and Val Burton. Screen play by Nat Perrin. Direction by Edwin L. Marin. M-G-M.

Because radio entertainment is popular and the cinema is popular, there seems to be a current belief in certain quarters that a combination of the two will result in something superlative. As a matter of fact they usually mix as well as oil and water. "Hullabaloo" deals with a group of amateurs aspiring to radio fame; the most important of them is *Frank Merriweather* (Frank Morgan) who broadcasts a novelty number almost identical with Orson Welles' panic-raising battle of the men from Mars. While this wins *Frank* no contracts, it discloses his whereabouts to three former wives and three assorted offspring in search of alimony or a chance behind the microphone. Frank Morgan is fairly funny, though not at his best, and there are some good specialty acts scattered throughout the show.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Fair. **Children, 8 to 12** Little interest.

❖

KNUTE ROCKNE—ALL AMERICAN ◇ ◇

Pat O'Brien, Gale Page, Ronald Reagan, Donald Crisp, Albert Basserman, John Litel, Henry O'Neill, Owen Davis, Jr., John Qualen, Dorothy Tree, John Sheffield, The Moreau Choir of Notre Dame, Nick Lukats, Kane Richmond, William Marshall, William Byrne as The Four Horsemen; Howard Jones, Glenn "Pop" Warner, Alonzo Stagg, William "Bill" Spaulding. Original screen play by Robert Buckner. Directed by Lloyd Bacon. Warner Brothers.

This is an inspiring picturization of the life of a beloved national idol, and as such it has great appeal for all sorts of people, whether or not they share the national en-

thusiasm for football. The screen story is written from the private papers of Mrs. Rockne and the records of Notre Dame and carries the unmistakable stamp of sincerity. Beginning in Norway, the film shows Knute Rockne's father preparing to bring his family to the Land of Opportunity, and it covers the highlights of Rockne's career until the time of his death in an airplane accident. Because Knute Rockne worked hard and made sacrifices to take advantage of his opportunity, because he loved honor and courage and instilled those ideals in the minds of the young men who came under his influence, he not only won the love of thousands of Americans, but was greatly loved and honored by Norwegians as well. In the title role, Pat O'Brien gives a convincing, dignified, and sympathetic characterization. Donald Crisp as *Father Callahan*, Albert Basserman as *Father Nieuwald*, and Ronald Reagan as *George Gipp*, are exceptionally fine. For football fans, remarkably clear pictures of thrilling plays contribute greatly to the interest. This production is a really fine contribution to film biography.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Exceptionally good.

Children, 8 to 12 Yes, though possibly mature.

❖

A LITTLE BIT OF HEAVEN ◇ ◇

Gloria Jean, Robert Stack, Hugh Herbert, C. Aubrey Smith, Stuart Erwin, Nan Grey, Eugene Pallette, Billy Gilbert and Butch and Buddy. Screen play by Daniel Taradash, Gertrude Purcell and Harold Goldman from an original by Grover Jones. Direction by Andrew Marton. Musical direction by Charles Previn. Joe Pasternak Production. Universal pictures.

Midge, the lovable heroine of "The Underpup" has come back in "A Little Bit of Heaven" with her irascible but delightful *Grandpa* and others members of her unique family including all twelve uniformed uncles. The plot is less original and less appealing but it has fundamental social values also. When *Midge's* lovely voice is discovered by a radio broadcaster and she begins to bring in money, *Mother* and sister *Janet* insist on a luxurious home and begin to move in high society. They overlook their humble friends. *Midge* brings them to their senses. The story is more artificial than its predecessor and the characterizations are less clearly motivated, but there is endearing humor and it is pleasant entertainment. Hugh Herbert modifies his usually exaggerated mannerisms for the role of *Pop* and is a likable, human person. C. Aubrey Smith may always be depended upon. Billy Gilbert as *Tony* and Butch and Buddy, the kids, add sympathy and fun. Gloria Jean sings charmingly. Familiar faces of once famous stars in the cast are interesting to see again.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good.

Children, 8 to 12 Yes.

❖

THE LONG VOYAGE HOME ◇ ◇

John Wayne, Thomas Mitchell, Ian Hunter, Barry Fitzgerald, Wilfrid Lawson, Mildred Natwick, John Qualen, Ward Bond, Arthur Shields, Joseph Sawyer, J. M. Kerrigan, Rafaela Ottiano, David Hughes, Billy Bevan, Cyril McLaglen, Douglas Walton. Story based upon one-act plays by Eugene O'Neill. Screen play by Dudley Nichols. Cinematography by Gregg Toland, A. S. C. Musical score by Richard Hageman. Direction by John Ford. Walter Wanger, producer. United Artists.

With material provided by four of Eugene O'Neill's one-act plays of life on the sea, the producers have created a film which will be remembered for its magnificent photography and atmosphere surcharged with the frustrated emotions of men whose nerves have been strained to the breaking point. It has no sustained plot but is rather a series of incidents tied together by a strong emotional quality and one theme—the hopelessness of a sailor's trying to escape from the spell of the sea. The crew of the small tramp steamer *Glencairn* is made up of contrasting types of men all of whom dream of one day going "home" to a peaceful life on shore, but when their ship sets sail on another voyage none has completely realized his dream. The different characters are remarkably portrayed by the fine cast, and the hand of a master artist is evident in every detail of the film. Richard Hageman's musical score is notable.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too sombre and sordid.

Children, 8 to 12 Entirely unsuitable.

❖

MEXICAN SPITFIRE OUT WEST ◇ ◇

Lupe Velez, Leon Errol, Donald Woods, Elizabeth Risdon, Cecil Kellaway, Linda Hayes, Lydia Bilbrook. Story by Charles E. Roberts. Screen play by Charles E. Roberts and Jack Townley. Direction by Leslie Goodwins. R.K.O.

This is hilarious but definitely insane comedy in which Leon Errol sustains the interest by his thoroughly amusing portrayal of a dual role. It is the story of mistaken identity. The uncle of a jealous woman is taken for a visiting English Lord whose big business deal with her husband is keeping him too occupied to suit her. Do not attempt to make sense from the tomfoolery. It is riotous farce which many will enjoy for its laughs.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes.

Children, 8 to 12 Passable but confusing.

MOON OVER BURMA ◇ ◇

Dorothy Lamour, Robert Preston, Preston Foster, Doris Nolan, Albert Basserman. Based on a story by Wilson Collison. Screen play by Frank Wead, W. P. Lipscomb and Harry Clork. Direction by Louis King. Paramount.

Deep in the jungles of Burma two red-blooded men manage a teak plantation for a blind owner and are in perfect accord until one of them brings home a night club performer who raises as many problems as Eve in the Garden of Eden. In addition to triangular turbulence, thrills are furnished by a treacherous cobra, a forest fire and a log jam. This is better than many jungle pictures. Albert Basserman is convincing as the blind man, and Dorothy Lamour's acting has improved a hundred per cent because her glamour output has been somewhat reduced by an astute director. On the whole the jungle atmosphere seems realistic, but as usual one senses the heavy hand of the stage manager when the lady goes into her routine of tropical songs with a convenient orchestra of native musicians and a honeyed Burma moon at the correct angle overhead.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No value. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

❖

NORTHWEST MOUNTED POLICE ◇ ◇

Gary Cooper, Madeleine Carroll, Paulette Goddard, Preston Foster, Robert Preston, George Bancroft, Lynne Overman, Akim Tamiroff, Walter Hampden, Lon Chaney, Jr., Montagu Love. Original screen play by Alan LeMay, Jesse H. Lasky, Jr., and C. Gardner Sullivan. Direction by Cecil B. DeMille. Musical score by Victor Young. Paramount.

This belongs to the days when war was filled with glory, and perils and hardships only served to increase the heroic adventure. To this day the Mounted Police are truly romantic figures, but in 1885 they had the dangers of a half-breed uprising to cope with. The settlers of western Canada felt that they had suffered severe grievances and to some extent this was true. When the story opens the half-breeds under the leadership of *Louis Riel* and the blackguard rumdealer, *Jacques Corbeau,* seek to inflame the Cree Indians to join them in rebellion against the Ottawa government. A small company of red-coated police, acknowledging no fear, determine to hold out until reinforcements arrive; they are ambushed and suffer heavy losses, but the seven intrepid survivors who ride alone into the Indian stronghold, win such admiration from *Chief Big Bear* that he proclaims himself once more a follower of the Queen.

Into the groundwork of history are woven fictional characters and love affairs. There is a lanky Texan, played by Gary Cooper, who comes North in search of an escaped murderer, a Scotsman who knits socks on the way to battle, a half-breed whose sense of humor costs him his life, a valiant nurse, torn between love for a brave sergeant and loyalty to her weak brother, a blue-eyed half-breed maiden whose deviltry brings death to many soldiers. There are many vivid figures, and as a whole the play is well cast. Madeleine Carroll has been more convincing. Not only do her cheeks remain unsullied after days and nights of hectic nursing, but she is so impartial in her treatment of the two contestants for her hand that her final choice comes as something of a shock; most of the audience is betting on the loser. At times the dialogue gets off key, and there are moments of obvious hokum. However, it remains a gripping story of men and battles. The subject lends itself admirably to Technicolor. The uniforms of the Mounted Police are gorgeous, as is the Indian regalia, and over the conflicts of men towers the magnificence of great forest and the massive, snow-draped peaks of the Canadian Rockies.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Stirring. **Children, 8 to 12** Too bloody.

❖

THE OLD SWIMMIN' HOLE ◇ ◇

Jackie Moran, Marcia Mae Jones, Leatrice Joy, Charles Brown, Theodor Von Eltz, George Cleveland, Dix Davis, Dorothy Vaughan, Sonny Boy Williams, Si Jenks. Original story by Gerald Breitigam. Screen play by Dorothy Reid. Direction by Robert McGowan. Monogram.

Here's a simple little American story of nice people living in a small town in the 1890's. The story begins at the old swimmin' hole when a young girl visitor to the town induces a boy to show her the secret club house of the village gang. This violation of club ethics starts a trend of events which opens the way for the boy to realize eventually his ambition to study medicine. There are social adjustments to be made and a mature love affair to be settled. In the end great happiness is promised for all involved. The wholesomeness of the story, the kindliness of the characters, and the genuine family affection displayed makes this pleasant entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes. **Children, 8 to 12** Yes.

❖

THE QUARTERBACK ◇ ◇

Wayne Morris, Virginia Dale, Lillian Cornell, Edgar Kennedy, Alan Mowbray, Jerome Cowan, Rod Cameron, Walter Catlett, Frank Burke, William Frawley. Original screen play by Robert Pirosh. Direction by H. Bruce Humberstone. Paramount.

Under a single registration, twins substitute for each other in college, one to play football, the other to attend classes. Complications arise when they fall in love with the same girl and when a gambling ring bribes the athletic brother to throw a game.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No: bad ethics. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

SEVEN SINNERS ◇ ◇

Marlene Dietrich, John Wayne, Albert Dekker, Mischa Auer, Anna Lee, Broderick Crawford, Billy Gilbert, Samuel Hinds, Oscar Homolka. Screen play by John Meehan and Harry Tugend from an original story by Ladislas Fodor. Musical director, Charles Previn. Photography, Rudolph Mate. Direction by Tay Garnett. Joe Pasternak production. Universal Pictures.

This brash and rowdy vehicle is designed to display Miss Dietrich's beauty, her figure and her engaging singing, and although it is frankly comic, it lays the Hays code away in mothballs. Cafe entertainers in the tropics seem, in movies, to combine all the glamour and sex appeal of Cleopatra. *Bijou* is no exception. Men fall for her at a glance from her heavily fringed eyes; her presence arouses all the lust of cave men; and her enforced passage from isle to isle is marked by cracked skulls and wrecked cafes. Alighting for a time at an American naval station she promptly takes the navy in hand until she is slapped into good behavior by a gob who, whatever his personal inclinations may be, still holds the honor of the service above all else. Before she can be deported the cafe of *The Seven Sinners* suffers a brawling holocaust which ends with combatants hanging from chandeliers, banisters, and rafters. It is said that the naval background was approved by a technical advisor from the Navy Department. One wonders whether concern for the accuracy of uniforms and gold braid was paramount, or if the susceptibility of young lieutenants was considered so typical that it required official approval. The atmospheric setting is interesting and the cast uniformly well selected. The picture is clever of its kind, but will be distasteful to many audiences.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

❖

THEY KNEW WHAT THEY WANTED ◇ ◇

Carole Lombard, Charles Laughton, William Gargan, Harry Carey, Frank Fay. From the play by Sidney Howard. Screen play by Robert Ardrey. Music by Alfred Newman. Direction by Garson Kanin. RKO Radio.

Sidney Howard's drama which won the Pulitzer prize a few years ago presented a knotty problem to those who transferred it to the screen. Not only is it true that the audience of a stage play consists of a cross-section of the public older in years and more inured to the discussion of sex irregularities, but there is a quality of intense reality about the motion picture medium which calls for a greater delicacy of balance and a stricter adherence to the principles of good taste. That most of the pitfalls have been avoided without loss of the essential robustness of this story is a credit to all who entered into the production. In a few scenes the passion content runs high; it is not easy to forget William Gargans face as he stares across the injured Italian's bed at the girl who has promised to be his patron's wife, although this scene is counterbalanced by his pale features upheld to the terrific blows of revenge at the last.

Tony is a vineyardist in the lovely Napa Valley of California who has prospered and longs for a wife; he finds his ideal in *Amy*, a waitress in a cheap little Italian restaurant in San Francisco, is so filled with awe that he induces his foreman, *Joe*, to write the naive letters of courtship. *Joe*, young, hard, confident, free with all women, meets her when she arrives, and when *Tony* is severely hurt in the pre-nuptian celebration, succumbs to his desire. From then on each reacts according to his own beliefs and his own character and out of the turmoil each gets what he really wanted.

Charles Laughton has played so many outstanding parts that it is not surprising to find him remarkably real as *Tony*. It is a different Laughton with black, curly hair who seems smaller than usual, and thoroughly Italian in speech and temperament. For Carole Lombard there are no showy costumes, no striking make-up, and she is so competent in her acting that one never misses them. William Gargan creates of *Joe* a living person not wholly bad in spite of his unbridled impulses. The doctor (Harry Carey) has a human warmth, and the unconventional, local priest (Frank Fay) exerts an inspired infiuence over his people.

Much of the credit for the picture must go to the young director, Garson Kanin who has made this simple story vital and arresting. A great deal of the photography is taken in the darker tones used effectively in "The Grapes of Wrath," and the outdoor scenes were actually filmed in the beautiful Napa Valley with its rich vineyards and gently rising foothills.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Sophisticated adult rating. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

❖

THE THIEF OF BAGDAD ◇ ◇

Conrad Veidt, Sabu, June Duprez, John Justin, Rex Ingram, Miles Malleson, Morton Selton, Mary Morris. Scenario by Lajos Biro. Direction by Ludwig Berger, Michael Powell and Tim Whelan. Chief photographer, George Perinal. Special effects by Lawrence Butler. Musical score by Milkos Rozsa. Director, Muir Mathieson. Associate producers, Zolton Korda and William Cameron Menzies. Producer, Alexander Korda. United Artists.

The visual beauty of sets and color in this Arabian Nights' fantasy captivates the imagination. Rarely, if ever, has the screen caught such magical beauty. For this extraordinary achievement alone, would the "Thief of Bagdad" rate esteem. But there is also an entertaining story which in spite of fantastic

setting has a human touch. The technical effects, while not always perfect, are still unique, and Sabu is a thoroughly enchanting "Thief." The story concerns *Ahmad,* King of Bagdad, who because he looked upon and loved a Princess aroused the ire of a dealer in magic, *Jaffer,* his jealous Grand Visier. It pictures *Ahmad's* wanderings with the little thief *Abu,* on whom *Jaffer's* ire has also fallen and their search for the Princess whom *Jaffer* has hidden. After many exciting experiences, the lovers are united, *Jeffer's* powers are destroyed, and *Abu* sets forth on further secret and nefarious adventures.

The technical accomplishments are fascinating: the *Genie's* emergence from the bottle on the beach; the mammoth cobweb which *Abu* climbs; the *Sultan's* lively toys; the mechanical horse; and the lovely flying carpet. It is an exciting and adventurous escape from reality. The cast is excellent; John Justin as the *King,* June Duprez, the beautiful *Princess,* Miles Malleson as an amusing, childish monarch with a senile passion for mechanical toys, and Conrad Veidt, the venomous *Jaffer.* The memories which will linger are the exquisite pictorial beauty unfolded on the screen, the magic of color and music, the fascinating types of faces in the crowds, and a delightful little Indian boy who seems the incarnation of a mythical character in a fairy tale.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes. **Children, 8 to 12** Long and exciting.

❖

THIRD FINGER—LEFT HAND ◇ ◇

Myrna Loy, Melvyn Douglas, Raymond Walburn, Lee Bowman, Bonita Granville, Felix Bressart, Donald Meek, Ann Morriss. Original screen play by Lionel Houser. Musical score, David Snell. Direction by Robert Z. Leonard. M.-G.-M.

This is a sophisticated, dressed up farce, smoothly acted by two of Hollywood's favorite stars, and as such it will probably satisfy many film goers, although it falls short of the best that has been offered in its category. The story is about a smart young woman magazine editor who invents an absent husband to prctect her from the unwelcome attentions of her employer and the jealousy of his wife. The lie stirs up plenty of trouble when a new suitor introduces himself to her family as the husband just returned from foreign travels and moves into their household. In attempting to score on one another, both characters appear in a rather unsympathetic light, and the production will probably not increase their popularity.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

TOO MANY GIRLS ◇ ◇

Lucille Ball, Richard Carlson, Ann Miller, Eddie Bracken, Frances Langford, Desi Arnaz, Hal LeRoy, Libby Bennett, Harry Shannon, Douglas Walton. Screen play by John Twist from the stage play "Too Many Girls." Book by George Marion. Music by Richard Rogers. Lyrics by Lorenz Hart. Dances arranged by LeRoy Prinz. Musical director, George Bassman. Produced and directed by George Abbott. R.K.O.

Parents who sometimes wonder what their children get from the money spent on higher education may feel that their suspicions are verified in this jolly musical comedy. But let them not be disturbed. It is all in the spirit of gayest fun. *Pottawatmie College* is a mythical school on the desert at "Stop Gap," New Mexico. Its buildings are a combination of Hopi, Navajo, Yaqui Indian and Mexican design and, minus a single class room, they resemble a glorified resort. To this lovely setting repairs a wilful heiress who has secret designs upon the heart of an attractive writer working in the neighborhood. In her wake follow four bodyguards hired by her father to keep her out of mischief. They are "All American" gridiron heroes and, by dividing the work of sleuthing, they find time to give their talents to the football squad and thereby set the college on a sound financial basis. These game sequences are highly amusing.

The cast is unusually young and are for once amazingly normal in appearance, for the most part, lacking the artificial glamour generally considered necessary by the movies for college atmosphere. The four boys are skilful comics, especially Eddie Bracken who is new to the screen and whose antics are delightful. His satirized version of the romantic ditty "I Didn't Know What Time It Was" is hilarious. The dances are spectacular. Desi Arnaz at the drums in the Conga scene is remarkably clever. The stunning rhythm is barbaric, reminiscent of the jungle atmosphere in "Emperor Jones" or the dance on the drum in a picture of long ago in which Paul Whiteman and his orchestra starred. "Too many Girls" is light, gay, and entertaining with hilarious wisecracks and clever satire on youthful preoccupations.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Should please. **Children, 8 to 12** Less interest.

❖

TUG BOAT ANNIE SAILS AGAIN ◇ ◇

Marjorie Rambeau, Alan Hale, Jane Wyman, Ronald Reagan, Clarence Kolv, Charles Halton, Paul Hurst, Victor Kilian, Chill Wills, Harry Shannon. Original screen play by Walter De Leon, based on characters created by Norman Reilly Raine. Direction by Lewis Seiler. Warner Bros.

It is a difficult assignment for Marjorie Rambeau to take over a role created for the screen by Marie Dresslar, but while Miss Rambeau is not the *Annie* we remember, her characterization is none the less entertaining. The original *Tug Boat Annie* was a

woman who because of her physique as well as her sharp and pungent wit, was capable of coping with any man. Miss Rambeau's *Annie* gives the impression of a woman who has shed a more protected role in life only because of sheer necessity and who must depend upon her resourcefulness and ingenuity to outwit her competitors. This she does when she is about to lose her job because a new customer has no faith in women as "skippers." It is a human story with amusing dialogue and a pleasing and unconventional romance between one of *Annie's* many proteges (Eddie Kent) and the daughter of the wealthy customer (Jane Wyman). Alan Hale, as *Captain Bullwinkle,* her bitter rival in competition, is an excellent vis-a-vis.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes. **Children, 8 to 12** If interested.

❖

WAGON TRAINS ◇ ◇

Tim Holt, Ray Whitley, Emmett Lynn, Martha O'Driscoll, Malcolm McTaggart, Cliff Clark. Screen play by Morton Grant. Story by Bernard McConville. Direction by Edward Kelly. R.K.O.

Small boys should revel in this old time melodrama of the West which calls for hissing the villain and applauding the hero. In the old days when wagon trains carry supplies to the settlers on the frontier our hero (handsome Tim Holt) stands for law and order against the bad men who incite disorder among the Indians. There is plenty of action but it is not too realistic nor too violent. The Western scenery is beautiful, and the music is of the cowboy variety.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Matter of taste. **Children, 8 to 12** Perhaps.

❖

WHO KILLED AUNT MAGGIE? ◇ ◇

John Hubbard, Wendy Barrie, Edgar Kennedy, Elizabeth Patterson, Onslow Stevens, Joyce Compton, Walter Abel, Mona Barrie, Willie Best, Daisy Lee Mothershed, Milton Parsons. Screen play by Stuart Palmer. Based on novel by Medora Field. Direction by Arthur Lubin. Republic Pictures.

This is a good old fashioned mystery story with sliding panels, disappearing bodies, black cats and eerie sounds to confound, and a bewildered sheriff and a befuddled colored boy to provide comedy relief. The capable cast, good direction and entertaining story hold attention.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good mystery. **Children, 8 to 12** Very exciting.

❖

WORLD IN FLAMES ◇ ◇

Written and documented by Wm. C. Park. Accompanying dialogue supplied by Gregory Abbott, Gilbert Martyn and Tom Chalmers. Actual war scenes and descriptions by Arthur Menken, Paramount cameraman. Produced by Albert J. Richard. Paramount.

This is a documentary film of real importance because it is an eye witness report by cameramen of the amazing chain of world-shaking events which have taken place during the past ten years and which have contributed to the present chaos. The most impressive shots are Arthur Menken's coverage of the invasion of Norway. The film is an historical document which every adult concerned with world affairs should see. This direct picture of actual happenings is an unanswerable plea for preparedness against aggression.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 For high school age. **Children, 8 to 12** Terrifying.

❖

THE MARK OF ZORRO ◇ ◇

Tyrone Power, Linda Darnell, Basil Rathbone. Direction by Rouben Mamoulian. 20th Century-Fox.

A full review of this film will appear in the next issue. It is a romantic melodrama of early days in California, exciting for very young children but otherwise a good family picture.

❖

SHORT SUBJECTS

THE MARCH OF TIME No. 1 ◇ ◇

On Foreign Newsfronts.

TIME has made a resume of the events in Europe of the last year and a half, featuring the correspondents of American newspapers such as the New York Times, the Hearst papers, etc. It has surprisingly intimate views of European rulers and is a fine tribute to the courageous men who bring back the truth to American readers. The presentation is factual and unbiased.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Very interesting. **Children, 8 to 12** Mature.

❖

THE MARCH OF TIME No. 2 ◇ ◇

Britain's R. A. F.

A dramatic description of the Royal Air Force, showing manufacture of planes and various phases of fighting, stressing the high British morale. The photography is admirable; every scene is intensely interesting, and there are no gruesome details of war.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Very good. **Children, 8 to 12** Too exciting for many.

❖

SERVICE WITH THE COLORS ◇ ◇

Warner Bros.-Vitaphone.

This is an educational film made in fine Technicolor at the Presidio at San Francisco to explain the constructive side of army life. It shows the physical development of recruits in the system of training as well as their opportunities to learn useful trades. Views of the Golden Gate Bridge against the blue waters of the bay and shots of the San Francisco Fair contribute to the beauty of the picture. This is one of a series of patriotic shorts made by Warner Brothers and will probably have some weight in influencing young men to enlist.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Interesting. **Children, 8 to 12** Yes.

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Charter Pilot
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FEATURE FILMS

ARIZONA ◇ ◇

Jean Arthur, William Holden, Warren William, Porter Hall, Paul Harvey, George Chandler, Byron Folger, Regis Toomey, Paul Lopez, Edgar Buchanan, Colin Tapley, Uvaldo Varela, Addison Richards, Nina Campana. Screen play by Claude Binyon, based on story by Clarence Budington Kelland. Direction by Wesley Ruggles. Columbia Pictures.

"Arizona" is unique in that it actually seems to recreate a historical period. The early days of Tucson are revived without the usual movie atmosphere and with an astonishing impression of reality: the crude little town set down on the desert with its dust, its mud; the excessive daily heat and the brilliant moonlit nights and polyglot population; and in the background the beautiful mountains and the deep blue sky with its changing cloud formations. The people, too, seem real. It is the story of *Phoebe Titus* who bakes pies for a living while her ambition grows to own the finest cow ranch in the valley, stocked with the best Eastern cattle. It is the time of the Civil War when the state did not know whether to join the North or the South and when the changing military occupation left Tucson without strict discipline. Consequently the citizens had no legal protection and each had to fend for himself. *Phoebe* is competent to do this. Miss Arthur makes the girl exceedingly believable, for with all her ability and determination she never loses her femininity, yet never becomes the routine movie herione. Many of the men's roles are real pioneer characters and worthy of respect. Warren Williams is the frontier racketeer who tries to rob *Phoebe,* and Bill Holden makes a likeable hero who loves her and helps her realize her ambition.

For the most part violent action is sacrificed to dialogue but the finale is a thrilling cattle stampede which is excitingly and amazingly executed. The film has a peculiarly authentic atmosphere. It is an unusual picture of pioneer days, and one notable asset is its complete lack of vulgarity in act and dialogue.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent. **Children, 8 to 12** Excellent

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THE BANK DICK ◇ ◇

W. C. Fields, Una Merkel, Richard Purcell, Shemp Howard, Cora Witherspoon, Franklin Pangborn, Jessie Ralph. Original screen play by Mahatma Kane Jeeves. Direction by Edward Cline. Universal.

This film gives no emphasis to plot, furnishing merely a series of opportunities for W. C. Fields to exploit his peculiar brand of humor. As *Egbert Souse,* Mr. Fields lives up to the name, and the incidents are slapstick adventures in the use and effect of intoxicants. He is a drunken ne'er-do-well who

bungles into the position of bank detective, induces the bank teller to embezzle money to buy worthless stock and ends by becoming a millionaire. The obvious absurdities make it innocuous. The breakneck race at the climax is funny, and Franklin Pangborn has a ridiculous scene where he imbibes unwisely. But it is a film written for and around Mr. Fields, and one must like his kind of fun-making to enjoy it.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

❖

BARNYARD FOLLIES ◇ ◇

Mary Lee, Rufe Davis, June Storey, Jed Prouty, Victor Kilian, Joan Woodbury, Carl "Alfalfa" Switzer, Robert Homans, Dorothy Harrison. Original screen play by Dorrell and Stuart McGowan. Direction by Frank McDonald. Republic Pictures.

Pappy (Harry Cheshire) is a doctor who believes in aiding young people by teaching them to become self-supporting on a farm. When the farm needs financial help a talented group of youngsters put on a show to raise money. Many well known radio characters take part, among them "Pappy" Cheshire, The Cackle Sisters, Jim Jeffries, The Kidoodlers, Ralph Bowman and Isabel Randolph, known to radio fans as *Mrs. Uppington*, with Fibber McGee. It is a crowded hour of entertainment. The 4-H demonstrations are of particular interest.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes. **Children, 8 to 12** If interested.

❖

BITTER SWEET ◇ ◇

Jeanette MacDonald, Nelson Eddy, George Sanders, Ian Hunter, Felix Bressart, Edward Ashley, Lynne Carver, Diana Lewis, Curt Bois, Fay Holden. Original play, music and lyrics by Noel Coward. Produced by Victor Saville. Screen play by Lesser Samuels. Direction by W. S. Van Dyke II. M. G. M.

The names of Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy stand for the best in film light opera. "Bitter Sweet" offers again this fine team of stars in another lovely technicolor production and will delight many audiences with the beauty of its music and the glamour of its costumes. Noel Coward's opera, though lovely on the stage, is not so well suited to the screen as some others in which Miss MacDonald and Mr. Eddy have captivated their audiences. There are fewer ensembles, fewer romantic adventures and action scenes, and there is less gaiety and humor.

The final scene, however, equals if it does not excel anything that has previously been offered on the screen. It is exquisitely designed and costumed and the color tones of cream and copper are a triumph of loveliness.

The story is no doubt familiar to many. It tells of the romance of *Carl*, a Viennese singing teacher and composer, and his English pupil, *Sarah*. They elope and go to live in Vienna where they are happy in spite of poverty until, at the moment when success is within their grasp, *Carl* dies tragically, leaving *Sarah* only his memory with which to share their hard won honors.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 If interested in light opera. **Children, 8 to 12** Too mature and too long.

❖

CHARTER PILOT ◇ ◇

Lloyd Nolan, Lynn Bari, Arleen Whelan, Geo. Montgomery, Hobart Cavanaugh. Based on a story by J. Robert Bren and Norman Houston. Screen play by Stanley Rauh and Lester Ziffren. Direction by Eugene Forde. 20th Century-Fox.

Exploits in the air are combined with radio when a girl who writes and broadcasts a serial describes the adventures of her boy friend. *Charter Pilot* is below the standards of most air pictures. At times the thrills are multiplied until they become ridiculous, often the dialogue is artificial, and there is little real sympathy for the main characters because they brawl, drink excessively, and have scant regard for the value of human life.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

❖

COMRADE X ◇ ◇

Clark Gable, Hedy Lamarr, Oscar Homolka, Felix Bressart, Eve Arden, Sig Rumann, Natasha Lyters. Story by Walter Reisch. Screen play by Ben Hecht and Charles Lederer. Direction by King Vidor. Musical direction by Bromislau Caper. M. G. M.

"Comrade X," another sophisticated comedy ridiculing Communism, is moulded along the lines of "Ninotchka," especially in that the heroine is a beautiful young zealot who abandons her cause when she falls in love with an American. The dialogue is clever enough though not a great many lines actually ring the bell, and the humor is more often slapstick than subtle. The film is most fun in the last part when it becomes an action thriller and the lovers escape from Russia in a wildly maneuvered tank with what appears to be an entire Soviet tank division on their trail.

Hedy Lamarr has acquired sparkle and animation which improve her greatly, and Clark Gable, though not at his best as the American newspaper man, has some extremely amusing scenes. The supporting cast is exceedingly good. Oscar Homolka, Felix Bressart, and Eve Arden are especially clever.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Sophisticated. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

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DARK STREETS OF CAIRO ◇ ◇

Sigrid Gurie, Katherine De Mille, Ralph Byrd, Eddie Quillan, Rod LaRoque, Yollande Mollot, Siegfried Arno, George Zucco, Lloyd Corrigan. Original screen play by Alex Gootlieb. Direction by Leslie Kardos. Universal.

Shadowy streets, secret passageways, living creatures emerging from mummy cases, and through it all the haunting, mysterious music of the East: the type is familiar and yet it is sufficiently entertaining if one is in the mood. Here is unfolded the story of the seven jewels of a seventh pharoah, unearthed by an American archeologist, offered for sale to a baron and his charming niece, and coveted by the leader of a native criminal gang. When the atmosphere becomes too tense, Eddie Quillan breaks it up with a sally of humor. Cast and direction are suitable, although no one gathers any laurels.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes. **Children, 8 to 12** Too mature.

❖

DR. KILDARE'S CRISIS ◇ ◇

Lew Ayres, Lionel Barrymore, Laraine Day, Robert Young, Nat Pendleton, Walter Kingsford, Alma Kruger. Screen play by Harry Ruskin and Willis Goldbeck. Direction by Harold S. Bucquet. M. G. M.

In spite of the fact that the film is ably cast with Lew Ayres and Lionel Barrymore as the well-loved doctors and Robert Young as an unusually interesting patient, this is not a particularly good picture. It is too episodic; many characters are brought in to do a turn for a moment or so and then dropped from sight, and although there is a serious problem in view, it is not built up to a dramatic climax. As a lesson in medicine, there are seeds of disaster. Too many people are prone to diagnose their own symptoms instead of consulting a reputable physician, and if ignorant or semi-intelligent individuals deduce from this story that anyone who has moments of elation followed by periods of deep depression and occasionally imagines he hears strange sounds, necessarily is a victim of so dire a disease as epilepsy, the picture may actually do a good deal of harm.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too mature a problem. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

❖

ESCAPE TO GLORY ◇ ◇

Pat O'Brien, Constance Bennett, John Halliday, Melville Cooper, Alan Baxter, Edgar Buchanan, Marjorie Gateson, Francis Pierlot, Jessie Busley, Stanley Logan, Frank Sully, Erwin Kalser, Don Beddoe, Leslie Denison. Screen play by P. J. Wolfson, from story by Sidney Biddell and Fredric Frank. Direction by John Brahm. Columbia Pictures.

On the day that war is declared between England and Germany, an English freighter bound for New York with a cargo of gold bullion leaves England with a small group of passengers who are forced to accept very cramped accommodations. Their experiences and emotional reactions during the passage and their encounter with a German submarine are told in vivid anl exciting detail. The tense and highly dramatic nature of this story is greatly enhanced by the excellent use of special photographic effects, and the musical score is well coordinated with the photography. It does much to produce the impression of mystery and unknown danger at the beginning and of grimness and ominous suspense as the picture progresses. The contrasting types are well cast, and the roles are creditably performed. Constance Bennett plays a sophisticated woman and Pat O'Brien a ne'er-do-well who becomes a hero in the emergency.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

❖

THE FARGO KID ◇ ◇

Tim Holt, Ray Whitley, Emmett Lynn, Cyrus W. Kendall, Jane Drummond, Ernie Adams, Paul Fix. Story by W. C. Tuttle. Screen play by Morton Grant and Arthur V. Jones. Direction by Edward Killy. R. K. O.-Radio.

Fargo Kid is a hard-hitting, accurately shooting hero who outwits the villain and saves a gold mine for the parents of a beautiful girl, whom he relinquishes at the finish in accordance with the custom of many-up-to-date Westerns. The villain is a dishonest assayer who has located a pocket of gold in the claim of one of his clients. He hires an outlaw to murder the owner—ah but treachery fails! Tim Holt's pleasing grin awakes confidence in his resourcefulness. The film has the usual good points of Westerns: exciting action, fine mountain views and good riding. The acting and direction are second rate, but those who like Westerns will applaud anyhow.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes. **Children, 8 to 12** Too tense for many.

❖

GALLANT SONS ◇ ◇

Jackie Cooper, Bonita Granville, Gene Reynolds, Gail Patrick, Ian Hunter, June Preisser, Leo Gorcey, William Tracy, Tommy Kelly, Edward Ashley, El Brendel. Screen play by William R. Lipman and Marion Parsonnet. Direction by George B. Seitz. Produced by Frederick Stephani. M. G. M.

"Gallant Sons" is rather obviously written to order for the youngsters under contract on the M. G. M. lot. It tells a fantastic hokum-filled story of high school boys and girls who do an expert job of sleuthing to clear one boy's father of an unjust conviction of murder. As is too often the case in films starring juveniles, adolescent antics are portrayed in combination with unwholesome problems of adults, and glamour and

sympathy are built up around a character who, though not guilty of murder, is nevertheless a lawbreaker. Ian Hunter as the convicted father is a gentle, charming and phenomenally kind gentleman who runs a high class gambling salon. His code of ethics forbids him to allow his patrons to wager more than they can afford to lose, but a newspaper editor crusading against the gambling element is mean enough to try to "get something" on him. This causes a breach in the friendship of the two sons which is healed only when the boys combine their efforts to track down the real murderer. Suspense effectively used gives the picture whatever interest it may claim. The dialogue is unusually poor, especially in the beginning and the plot has a hard time gaining momentum.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Ethically misleading. **Children, 8 to 12** Unwholesome.

❖

GIVE US WINGS ◇ ◇

Billy Halop, Huntz Hall, Bernard Punsly, Gabriel Dell, Bobby Jordan, Wallace Ford, Victor Jory, Anne Gwynne. Story by Eliott Gibbons. Screen play by Arthur T. Horman. Direction by Charles Lamont. Musical direction by Charles Previn. Universal.

In "Give Us Wings,' the "Dead End" boy actors are cast again as lawless hoodlums whose only virtue is loyalty to each other. Dissatisfied with their work as student mechanics under government supervision and rebellious because they cannot meet the educational requirements for aviators, they take employment with an unlicensed crop-dusting company in the south. In their new jobs they fly obsolete planes under the worst possible conditions until one of them is killed and the others take revenge upon their unscrupulous employer. Thus they become heros and get jobs as pilots for a better company.

The picture is too poorly done to be entertaining and it is most objectionable in the bad example it sets.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Extremely poor. **Children, 8 to 12** Objectionable.

❖

JENNIE ◇ ◇

Virginia Gilmore, William Henry, George Montgomery, Ludwig Stossel, Dorris Bowdon, Rand Brooks, Rita Quigley, Hermine Sterler, Harlan Briggs, Irving Bacon, Almira Sessions, Aldrich Bowker. Screen play by Harold Buchman and Maurice Raft, from an original story by Jane Eberle. Direction by David Burton. Sol M. Wurtzel producer. 20th Century-Fox.

It is somewhat unusual for a film to treat seriously the subject of human relations, and yet this simple, unpretentious picture presents a problem which exists in less exaggerated form perhaps, in many families. It is about the tyrannical parent who completely dominates his family. *Jennie* marries a young man whose father, a former German immigrant, holds each member of the family under his thumb through fear and finances. *Jennie* has worked and supported herself even in the days of the gay 90s, the time in which the story is set, and she is appalled by the situation. She begins at once to liberate the children and in the end does so in an amusing fashion to everyone's satisfaction.

Because the production values are not outstanding, some may overlook this picture. But it is satisfying and entertaining, and it offers food for thought.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Mature but entertaining. **Children, 8 to 12** Hardly suitable.

❖

LADY WITH RED HAIR ◇ ◇

Miriam Hopkins, Claude Rains, Richard Ainley, Laura Hope Crews, Helen Westley, John Litel, Mona Barrie, Victor Jory, Cecil Kelloway, Fritz Leiber, Johnnie Russell, Selmer Jackson. Screen play by Charles Kenyon and Milton Krims. From the story by N. Brewster Morse and Norbert Faulkner. Based upon the memories of Mrs. Leslie Carter. Direction by Kurt Bernhardt. Warner Brothers.

The sensational advertising written for this film seems uncalled for since neither Miss Hopkins' portrayal nor the story material reveals any startling information about the life of Mrs. Leslie Carter. The production is distinguished not only by brilliant performances but by technical excellence and the interest of its carefully authentic and picturesque sets and period costumes. Whether or not Miss Hopkins gives a true impression of Mrs. Carter as she really was is not so important as the fact that she presents a fascinating character study of a clever, headstrong, and charming young woman who became a great actress through her own determination to succeed and David Belasco's zealous tutelage. Claude Rains, though not co-starred with Miss Hopkins, takes more than half the honors with his remarkable portrayal of Belasco.

The picture does not appeal greatly to the emotions, possibly because it has so little plot that it can hardly be thought of as more than a series of incidents chosen at random from the memories of Mrs. Carter. However, it may be considered by many as all the more interesting because it does not pour biographical material into a mould to fit the requirements of a conventional plot.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Probably no interest for under 14. **Children, 8 to 12** No interest.

❖

THE LETTER ◇ ◇

Bette Davis, Herbert Marshall, James Stephenson, Frieda Inescort, Gale Sondergaard, Bruce Lester, Elizabeth Earl, Cecil Kellaway, Sen Yung, Doris Lloyd, Willie Fung, Tetsu Komai. Screen play by Howard Koch, adapted from story by Somerset Maugham. Direction by William Wyler. Music by Max Steiner. Warner Bros.

"The Letter," a powerful drama by Som-

erset Maugham, with which we are wont to associate the vivid personality of Jeanne Eagles, is now presented with Bette Davis in the starring role. It is a difficult assignment to interpret the moods of a woman seemingly poised, calm, sure of herself and yet crazed by jealousy and fear, but Miss Davis gives a superb and exciting performance. It is a starkly compelling tragedy, the story of *Leslie Crosby,* who, living with her husband on a rubber plantation near Singapore, vindictively murders a man. Since no breath of scandal has been connected with her name, the trial would seem to be a mere matter of form. However, her acceptable defense comes crashing about her head, and with it crash the lives of those who have believed in her and tried to clear her name.

The acting is superlative. In addition to Miss Davis, James Stephenson is particularly fine in his portrayal of the lawyer while Herbert Marshall is most effective in the later scenes. The ending has been somewhat changed for the screen, but if one is not too familiar with the original it will not matter. Apparently the rules of modern cinema demand swifter visible retribution. Even though much of the plot is melodramatic, the director has imbued the picture with great realism and the emotional effect is tremendous. The treatment, the acting and the unusual atmosphere makes this film of exceptional interest to mature audiences.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too mature and tragic. **Children, 8 to 12** Unsuitable.

❖

LITTLE MEN ◇ ◇

Kay Francis, Jack Oakie, George Bancroft, Jimmy Lydon, Ann Gillis, Charles Esmond, "Elsie", Jimmy Zaner, Richard Nichols, Johnny Burke, Lillian Randolph, Casey Johnson, Isabel Jewell. Screen play by Mark Kelly and Arthur Caesar from the novel by Louisa May Alcott. Produced by Gene Towne and Graham Baker. Directed by Norman Z. McLeod. R. K. O.

It is a moot question whether it is a smart thing to turn a childhood classic into adult entertainment and to adapt a story so broadly that only a few characters are dimly recognizable. Granting that "Little Men" has less dramatic interest than "Little Women," the fact remains that the faithful adaptation of the latter book was in large measure one of the factors of its success as a film. "Little Men" in cinema form must stand or fall on its own merits. It is entirely unrelated to Louisa M. Alcott's story of childhood life under the wise and loving guidance of *Aunt Jo* and *Professor Bhear.*

The present plot is conventional. Two professional crooks leave an adolescent boy in the school. When the two hear that the *Professor* and *Jo* are to lose the School because of debt they sacrifice themselves to give help. Jack Oakie's comedy is the high light, but since much of it turns on his being caught in a safe he wishes to rob and on his impersonating a man in the late stages of delirium tremens, it is not well-suited to children's entertainment. The whole spirit of the original story has been sacrificed and the result is not, in its own right, of enough interest to attract wide attention.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Disappointing. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

❖

LI'L ABNER ◇ ◇

Granville Owen, Martha O'Driscoll, Mona Ray, Johnnie Morris, Buster Keaton, Billie Seward, Kay Sutton, Maude Eburne, Johnny Arthur, Walter Catlett. Screen play by Charles Kerr and Tyler Johnson, from an original story by Al Capp based on United Feature Comic by Al Capp. Direction by Albert Rogell. R. K. O.

The broad comedy of the comic strip is brought to life not too successfully here. Perhaps *Li'l Abner* is best taken in small daily doses, or possibly his appeal is best appreciated in cartoon form rather than in person. Whatever the reason, Li'l Abner seems vulgar rather than amusing on the screen.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

❖

LITTLE NELLIE KELLY ◇ ◇

Judy Garland, George Murphy, Charles Winninger, Douglas McPhail, Arthur Shields. Based on the musical comedy by George M. Cohan. Screen play by Jack McGowan. Direction by Norman Taurog. M. G. M.

"Little Nellie Kelly" is a play about refreshingly simple people straight from the green fields of Ireland to the New World, where *Jerry Kelly* becomes a proud policeman in the tradition of a whole generation of Irishmen. Surprisingly enough, Judy Garland is a wife and mother in the first phase of the picture and seems almost old enough for the part; later she plays the daughter grown to a blithe seventeen with the charm and fresh gaiety of an unspoiled girl of that age. She sings several songs upon request, the catchy strains of *Nellie Kelly I Love You* and *Singing in the Rain.* Charles Winninger is a cantankerous old devil, father of the first *Nellie* and grandfather of the second who loves them both in a narrow, selfish way and bitterly resents the advent of love into their lives; for many years he will not shake the hand of his son-in-law, although due to his aversion to work, he continues to share the latter's home. George Murphy has never been more delightful than in this thoroughly Irish role of *Jerry Kelly.* All in all, it is a picture of amusing and likeable people, offering an hour of escape into a simpler day and way of life.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good. **Children, 8 to 12** Probably little interest.

THE LONE WOLF KEEPS A DATE ◇ ◇

Warren Williams, Frances Robinson, Bruce Bennet, Eric Blore, Thurston Hall, Jed Prouty, Fred Kelso, Don Beddoe, Edward Gargan, Lester Matthews, Eddie Laughton, Mary Servoss. Story and screen play by Earl Fenton and Sidney Salkow, based on work by Louis Joseph Vance. Direction by Sidney Salkow. Columbia Pictures.

Michael Lanyard, The Lone Wolf, is a reformed crook whose hobby is stamp collecting. When he is unexpectedly involved in a murder mystery, his album is the novel instrument which aids in the capture of the guilty men. The film provides fair entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Harmless

Children, 8 to 12 No value.

❖

THE MARK OF ZORRO ◇ ◇

Tyrone Power, Linda Darnell, Basil Rathbone, Gale Sondergaard, Eugene Pallette, J. Edward Bromberg, Montague Love, Janet Beecher, Robert Lowery, Cris-Pin Martin, George Regas. Based on story "The Cures of Capistrano" by Johnson McCulley. Screen play by John Taintor Foote. Direction by Rouben Mamoulian. 20th Century-Fox.

Whatever oldsters may miss from their remembrance of Douglas Fairbanks Sr.'s acrobatic performance in "The Mark of Zorro," the younger generation will enjoy this version for it is an exciting and romantic tale of Old California where sleepy peons and dashing caballeros lived on huge ranchos or in the quaint pueblo called Los Angeles. *Diego* is a handsome, athletic youth who is recalled from a military school in Spain to find that his father, once governor of the district, has been superseded by a weak but greedy Don who, under the influence of an unscrupulous Captain of the Guard, is fleecing the population and enforcing a reign of terror. *Diego,* to further his plot to free the people of this domination, poses as a fop and dandy, but secretly rides as the mysterious *Zorro* who terrifies the officers and gives the peons hope and courage.

It is an excellent story. Tyrone Power has never been better. His characterization of the dual personality is very fine and he makes a handsome and spectacular hero. The sinister roles played by Basil Rathbone, J. Edward Bromberg, and Gale Sondergaard are well enacted also, and Linda Darnell is an ideal heroine presenting a splendid portrait of a charming girl who has character as well as beauty. Eugene Pallette has a colorful part. The duelling scene is guaranteed to make anyone sit on the edge of his seat. It is a thrilling sight. Rouben Mamoulian has combined action, romance, suspense and comedy in a masterly fashion, and the lovely settings make an interesting background for an exciting and entertaining plot.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good.

Children, 8 to 12 Good.

MURDER OVER NEW YORK ◇ ◇

Sidney Toler, Marjorie Weaver, Robert Lowery, Ricardo Cortez, Donald MacBride, Melville Cooper, Joan Valerie, Kane Richmond, Sen Yung, John Sutton, Clarence Muse, Lal Chand Mehra. Original screen play by Lester Ziffren, based on the character "Charlie Chan" created by Earl Derr Biggers. Direction by Harry Lachman. Sol M. Wurtzel producer. 20th Century-Fox.

Charlie Chan and his eager No. 2 son, *Jimmy,* find themselves confronted with another mystery. This time it is a particularly topical one since it concerns crashes of new government bombing planes. As usual the likable *Chan's* deductions are cunningly devised and astound his baffled companions as well as the audience, and *Jimmy* feels that he has contributed more to the solution than his amused parent is willing to admit.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes.

Children, 8 to 12 Depends upon maturity of the child.

❖

A NIGHT AT EARL CARROLL'S ◇ ◇

Ken Murray, Rose Hobart, Blanche Stewart, Elvia Allman, J. Carrol Naish, Billy Gilbert, Russell Hicks, Jack Norton. Original story and screen play by Lynn Starling. Direction by Kurt Neumann. Musical direction by Irvin Talbot. Paramount.

This is very ordinary and sometimes vulgar entertainment. As is obvious from the title, it is night-club vaudeville with the usual intermittent flashes of wit and beauty and a general atmosphere of glittering but tawdry sophistication. It seems designed principally to exploit Earl Carrol's show and would probably not have been so tiresome if the vaudeville had not been tied up with a silly plot. All the picture does is to prove that some shows are less attractive on the screen than on the stage.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Very questionable.

Children, 8 to 12 No.

❖

ONE NIGHT IN THE TROPICS ◇ ◇

Allan Jones, Nancy Kelly, Bud Abbott, Lou Costello, Robert Cummings, Mary Boland, William Frawley, Leo Carillo. Adapted by Kathryn Scola and Francis Martin from the novel "Love Insurance" by Earl Derr Biggers. Screen play by Gertrude Purcell and Charles Grayson. Direction by A. Edward Sutherland. Universal.

This is a light-weight picture with negligible story material. A young man takes out love insurance on his best friend and then falls in love with the young lady himself when they all meet under tropical skies. Allan Jones' beautiful voice goes a long way towards making a success of any film, and the scenes of the dance and the bull fight are colorful, but there is too much slap-stick. Abbott and Costello are tiresome on the screen, however entertaining they may be over the radio.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Little interest.

Children, 8 to 12 No.

THE PHILADELPHIA STORY ◇ ◇

Katharine Hepburn, Cary Grant, James Stewart, Ruth Hussey, John Howard, John Halliday, Virginia Weidler, Roland Young, Mary Nash, Henry Daniell, Lionel Pape, Rex Evans. Screen play by Donald Ogden Stewart, based on the play by Philip Barry. Directed by George Cukor. Produced by Joseph L. Mankiewicz. M. G. M.

"The Philadelphia Story" is exceedingly smart, sophisticated and amusing. Not everyone however will like the kind of poeple who are represented, for perhaps the only well-balanced characters are the reporter and the photographer, sent by the manager of the scandal magazine "SPY" to peep into the private lives of the socially elect *Lord* family. These two at least have a humanizing effect upon their victims and help in the adjustment which makes the agreeable ending. The author's contention is that one may be a "heel" whether one is in the four-hundred or in the self-made class. A woman may even be a "heel" if she is a lovely "goddess" with standards so high that she has no tolerance for the weaknesses of others. And it is this lesson of tolerance which gives strength to the comedy.

The play was written for Miss Hepburn, and she is delightful in the role of *Tracy Lord*. In fact the entire cast is exceptionally good: Jimmy Stewart, as the reporter who breaks down *Tracy's* lofty inhibitions and makes her human; Carey Grant as the first husband, although this is not his best role; John Howard as the outraged fiance, who is never quite at home in a social stratum to which he brings money as his only asset; Virginia Weidler as the precocious young sister, a rather pathetic child who is actually ashamed of her family life and who longs for security and normalcy; and John Halliday as the father whose philandering has attracted the attention of the editor of SPY and caused him to assign the Philadelphia story to his two ace reporters.

The film elaborates upon the play, replacing by action much of the stage dialogue. It is smartly set and extremely entertaining, one of the best of the seasons sophisticated social comedies.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

❖

REMEDY FOR RICHES ◇ ◇

Jean Hersholt, Dorothy Lovett, Edgar Kennedy, Jed Prouty, Walter Catlett, Robert Baldwin, Warren Hull, Maude Eburn. Original screen play by Lee Loeb. Direction by Erle C. Kenton. R. K. O.

A kindly, wise and tolerant country doctor prevents a major catastrophe from overwhelming the little town in which he lives. A pleasing treatment is given this story of unscrupulous oil promoters who plan to take the life savings of trusting villagers but are foiled by the timely action of *Dr. Christian.* The many humorous scenes and incidents make this picture a diverting but not a subtle one.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes. **Children, 8 to 12** Yes.

❖

SANDY GETS HER MAN ◇ ◇

Sandy, Stuart Erwin, Una Merkel, Edgar Kennedy, William Frawley, Ed Brophy, Wally Vernon, Jack Carson, William Davidson. Original screen play by Jane Storm and Sy Bartlett. Direction by Otis Garrett and Paul Gerard Smith. Universal.

Sandy is an exquisitely appealing baby who deserves a much better picture. Here her efforts are pitted against those of brawny policemen and firemen, and though she falls out of windows and climbs upon trucks, she can scarcely keep up with the men. Sandy's mother in the story is a widow who wavers between two suitors in rival branches of the public service until Sandy steps in and settles the matter. Slapstick abounds, and some of the situations are uproarious, but certain scenes are overdone, and the production is too melodramatic for one which features a two-year-old.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable. **Children, 8 to 12** Not especially good.

❖

TEXAS RANGERS RIDE AGAIN ◇ ◇

John Howard, Ellen Drew, Akim Tamiroff, May Robson, Roderick Crawford, Charley Grapewin, John Miljan. Story and screen play by William R. Lipman and Horace McCoy. Direction by James Hogan. Paramount.

Because of strong character delineation, this film has more to offer than the ordinary Western. May Robson as *Grandma Dangerfield* is lively, humorous and gallant, and Akim Tamiroff portrays the ranch hand *Mio Pio* with his usual skill and well-modulated dialogue. John Howard as *Jim Kingston,* the most important ranger, is good, as is Ellen Drew, but she plays an unsympathetic role for at least half of the picture. The photography is beautiful, and the musical background is well suited to the mood. The story concerns cattle rustling and the work of a company of Texas Rangers who outwit the law-breakers. Although there is a good deal of shooting, actual killings are relegated to the background so that there is less impression of ruthless violence than one receives in most pictures of this type.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good. **Children, 8 to 12** Exciting.

❖

TIN PAN ALLEY ◇ ◇

Alice Faye, Betty Grable, Jack Oakie, John Payne, Allen Jenkins, Esther Ralston, Nicholas Brothers, Ben Carter, John Loder, Billy Gilbert. Screen play by Robert Ellis and Helen Logan, based on story by Pamela Harris. Direction by Walter Lang. 20th Century-Fox.

Unless this musical comedy is overpub-

licized so that too much is expected, it should please. Possibly those who enjoy it most will be the ones who remember the songs popular during the last World War and who will chuckle over the evolution of "K-K-K-Katie" as presented on the screen. While Alice Faye and Betty Grable are headlined, it is Jack Oakie who takes the bows. His role is very amusing and his comedy carries a slight and well-worn story plot through with flying colors. The setting is Broadway between 1910 and 1918. Two struggling song writers make a hit, lose their money, quarrel with the girl who plugs their songs, go to war. Finally the lovers are reunited and "K-K-K-Katie" is put over as the song hit of the war.

There is youth in the picture, good singing, and one spectacular scene with lovely costumes and clever acts in which the Nicholas Brothers again display their amazing dance routines.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes.

Children, 8 to 12 If interested, but long. (over 2 hrs.)

YOU'LL FIND OUT ◇ ◇

Kay Kyser, Peter Lorre, Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi, Helen Parrish, Dennis O'Keefe, Alma Kruger, Joseph Eggenton. Direction by David Butler. Story by James V. Kern. R. K. O.-Radio.

Kay Kyser takes his band to a strange, remote mansion to supply the music for the twenty-first birthday celebration of a young girl, whose life, it soon appears, is threatened by three such experts in crime as Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi and Peter Lorre. It is one of those hybrid productions, part musical and part mystery, and not such a bad combination after all, as when one is tired of the singing and playing, something exciting happens, and when one has been worked up to the point of goose-flesh, it resolves into laughter and music again. Romance spins a web around Helen Parrish, the pleasing heroine, and personable young Dennis O'Keefe, while Alma Kruger is almost too realistic as the aunt whose mind is under the spell of a spiritualist faker. There is an innovation called the Sonovox, an instrument used to imitate the human voice in strange keys. Good songs include *The Bad Humor Man* and *I've Got a One Track Mind.*

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes.

Children, 8 to 12 Too scary.

SHORT SUBJECTS

EYES OF THE NAVY ◇ ◇

Produced with the cooperation of the U. S. Navy. M-G-M.

Training of naval aviators from beginners' school at Pensacola to the finished product in action at the San Diego base.

This is a well planned and directed picture, almost an invitation to eligible youths to join that branch of the service. Views of the plane maneuvers sometimes against fine cloud backgrounds, are thrilling and the photography is notable.

For all ages.

❖

FLAG OF HUMANITY ◇ ◇

Clara Barton and the Red Cross.

This is the story of the development of the Red Cross in America, and it is also a biography of Clara Barton, since all the hardships, struggles and achievements center around her. Nana Bryant plays the part with feeling and strength. It covers a long period, from the Civil War to the present day, and it shows many of the well-known historical characters. Costumes of the various periods seem authentic. and the Technicolor makes it a beautiful film.

For all ages.

❖

MARCH OF TIME ◇ ◇

(Arms and the Men)

Editors of Time Magazine. Released through R. K. O.

This is something which should interest everyone at the present time, since it is an excellent descriptive picture of the process of drafting young Americans and of their habits of life when they begin their military training. Photography is very fine, and the attitude of those in command is one that will prove reassuring to the conscripts as well as their families. Recommended for all ages.

N. B.—"March of Time" is now publishing study guides, the first one of which is on "Arms and the Men." The following para-

graph is quoted from this study guide, Issue No. 4. Vol. VII.

"This STUDY GUIDE series has but one purpose—to enable students and forum groups to more clearly understand the various important phases of world affairs brought to them by THE MARCH OF TIME. Your local theatre manager will see that you receive the STUDY GUIDE each month but if there is any additional help which we can give you or if you have any suggestions for the STUDY GUIDE please write us. Address: STUDY GUIDE, The March of Time, 369 Lexington Ave., New York City."

WALDO'S LAST STAND ◇ ◇

Recommended for all ages.
An "Our Gang" Comedy. M. G. M.

Where are the comedies of yesteryear? Either this is not so funny by far as the other pictures of "Our Gang" or tastes have changed. *Waldo* tries to run a lemonade stand, and his colleagues decide the idea needs promotion, so they turn an old barn into an impromptu cafe with a floor show of simpering little dancers impersonating adults. They try very hard but are only slightly amusing.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Mediocre. **Children, 8 to 12** Might like it.

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